





ALL IS NOT GOLD

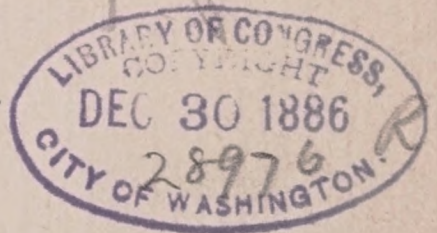
THAT

GLISTENS.

A SKETCH,

35
By RAE,

W. S. Stiles, Jr.



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ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLISTENS.

CHAPTER I.

"PAINT ROCK shall be our goal," was Edythe's gay cry, and Jack spurring his horse alongside, away they dash at a mad gallop. Mad indeed, it seems over such a road. Slippery rocks worn bare of earth, deep sloughs of mud, then pools of standing water, whose beds are made of sharp three-cornered stones, form a typical North Carolina mountain road. Their horses, however, reared from colthood to such as this, dashed on without a slip or stumble; the few stretches of good road scarcely serving to increase their speed. "'Twas now the bay, and now the black, and now the river with its wrack", that led the way till Paint Rock rose in sight: an overhanging mass, whose varied color has given rise to a legend that a neighboring tribe of Indians, for some important service, admitted it to membership and decorated it with their war paint. Be that as it may, as the two horses ended their wild run, Edythe's black showed slightly to the fore. She, all her senses tingling, exclaimed: "How glorious a run!"

and, oh! I am so glad I won; it shows I was right about the two horses."

"How could mine do himself justice? He is too polite to win when a lady rides against him."

"I am glad you put it on your horse and not on yourself. I know you too well to believe that you wouldn't run straight. The river doesn't seem to show any such courtesy. There it goes, actually laughing at us, in glee at our defeat." The noisy roar did seem to soften to a merry murmur at the thought of how unsuccessful, all human efforts to surpass nature, must be.

A few hours later the sound of horses hoofs is heard on the bridge, and Edythe and Jack gallop up to the Warm Springs Hotel. As they alight Mrs. Saxon, her mother, Ned, her brother, with Cissie Clayton, a sprightly looking girl with a piquant face, though not a beauty, await them on the porch.

"Did you get your look into the seven states at last?"

"Edythe went it one better."

"Yes; we managed to make it eight. Jack said that South Carolina, Alabama, and West Virginia were all about the same distance, so that we might as well see all three, as any two. The others can easily be seen."

"Then," asked Mrs. Saxon, "it repaid you for the rough ride up Roan Mountain and the walk to its summit?"

"I should think so! The view was superb in every direction; but what we enjoyed most was, that way off in the north we could just see three or four peaks, which Jack said were the Peaks of Otter. The snow is on them still, and a thunderstorm was going on just

below their summits. Oh! it was grand! A thick black cloud, rent here and there by the lightning's flash, which lit up the three or four white spots rising out of the dark mass into a dazzling radiance. Then in a moment the dense cloud rose, closing round them, the lightning ceased and all was at an end."

And we descended from the sublime almost to the ridiculous. We had a game of checkers."

"Of checkers! How did you manage for a board?"

"Jack's domain furnished us with that. We were so high up that we likened ourselves to the old Greek gods on Olympus and divided what we saw. Edythe took North Carolina and, I, Tennessee. Then as the fields of brown alternated so regularly with those of green, she proposed a game of checkers."

"What an idea!"

"Well, it was jolly up there moving our pieces about so many miles at a time; we thought ourselves gods indeed. But I couldn't play with Jack, for he took all my kings as fast as I could move them."

"That was natural," said Cissie Clayton, mischievously, "he wants to be your king himself."

"Nonsense! I know him too well to make a hero of him, and a true subject ought always to do that."

"You see Edythe has received all her ideas on that subject from the devotion of the Jacobites, so don't understand the modern notion of a sovereign who can be coarse and commonplace," said Jack.

"I hear them o'er the meadows the old church bells achime;
O'er the twilight misty meadows, in the sweet spring-time,"

rang out softly over the river, as the four were quietly rowing up the French Broad. The rapid current, and many rocks strewing its bed, required all the energy that Ned Saxon and Jack Harden, both of them fair oarsmen, could master. Cissie was equally occupied in steering, and to Edythe fell the pleasant occupation of entertaining them with her voice. Turning to the shore at last, they landed at the foot of Lover's Leap, a mountain that owes its name to one of those numerous tales about an Indian maiden, disappointed in love. It rises sheer two hundred feet from the river. To climb its precipitous side had been Edythe's intense desire from the moment of her arrival. At last, this, the day before their departure, she had persuaded her mother to allow it, and she and Jack were to scale it from the river, while Ned and Cissie were to ascend by the easier path on the other side, which she disdained. By hard work, availing themselves of every tree, every limb that could aid them, they steadily ascended; Edythe bound to achieve her aim. Though several times it seemed impossible that she should go on, yet skill and perseverance overcame every difficulty. When they stood at last upon the summit, Edythe's cheeks were flushed, her hair slightly in disorder, was blown about by the wind, while her eyes sparkled with triumph. Well might Jack's eyes rest for a moment on the picture she presented, before passing to the one that lay unrolled before him. Old Round Top to his right, Roan Mountain looming up in front, mountains on all sides, rearing their grey, green or blue summits of every shape, save where at his feet the little village clusters

round the springs, or the river sweeping by, cuts its way through their midst. The sun, magnificent in its growing force, lights them up in brilliant colors, or deepens their dark shadows. The bracing mountain air blows crisp and cool. Silence alone can express their feelings.

At length she breaks it, "How could that Indian girl have destroyed herself, when such a world lay about her with all its joys. I cannot understand it."

"And may you never! but then no one, who ever loved you, could be false to you."

After a pause, during which the reaction that always follows such a feeling of exaltation, affected her thoughts, Edythe went on, "I sometimes think so much happiness cannot be good for any one. I fear it cannot last. My share of sorrow ——" when her reflections were broken in upon by Ned's gay voice:

"The longest way round was not the shortest way home this time."

"How do you know?" asked Cissie. "We haven't reached there yet."

"You saucy minx! You don't deserve that I should help you down again."

"Nobody asked you, sir, she said."

Jack had drawn apart toward the brow of the hill away from the stream, and stood looking across at the one opposite. A cry from him brought them to his side.

"There's a forest fire just begun. I'm afraid it may prove a disastrous one."

Sure enough, there it was. As they watched its rapidly growing proportions, their attention was attracted

by a wagon approaching. It was on a road which wound around the hill upon which the fire was. Its occupants could not see it, hidden as it was by a turn of the road. How could they warn them? Their shouts could not be heard; their handkerchiefs were unnoticed; all attempts proved vain. Meanwhile, as it were, a tongue of flame was rapidly making its way to the turn of which we have spoken. It is running a race with the wagon, whose driver knows it not. The flames reach the road just as they turn the hill. The driver is dazed for a moment, and in that moment a falling brand strikes the horses. Half mad with pain, and frantic from the fright, away they dash, into what must prove the gates of a fiery death. The driver is overcome with fear, and the reins fall from his nerveless hands. In an instant his companion has sprung over the seat, caught them up, and stands firmly holding the horses to their course. No use to stop them now. In their swiftest speed lies the only chance of safety. With a few words he brings the other back to something like composure, and makes him keep the wagon free from the burning wood which now and then is blown upon them. A gallant figure, as he stands, head uncovered, hands outstretched, and body thrown back, to give them steadiness by its weight, his eye ever on the watch for each danger of the road. The flames sweep on with roar and crackle, dense clouds of smoke are blown about him and many a burning branch lies in the way to almost overturn them as the wagon passes over. Tree after tree succumbs, while here and there a forest giant, survivor of former fires and the woodman's axe, shoots

up in flames a mighty torch, king among its fellows, even in their destruction. At last the end of this fiery path draws near; but here is the greatest danger. The fire has crossed to the other side and forms in one place a perfect arch of flame. An immense tree hangs threateningly over the road. If it falls before they pass, it will block the way, and nothing can save them. It may even fall upon them, to bring a more speedy, but no less certain death. As the crisis approaches, the girls cling together, nervously clasping one another; Ned's hands are clenched, his face is pale; while even Jack, cool, immovable as he is, shows unmistakable signs of excitement. The first driver has sunk upon his knees in agonized prayer. Above, a dense canopy of smoke throws, as it were, the darkness of death about them, waving and quivering, as though even the heavens were fearful of the dreadful doom that awaited them. The hand that guides the reins alone does not tremble, as he stands in the midst of this awful scene, undaunted. A fierce blow of the whip, and a cry of encouragement, are all that show he even knows the danger. They rapidly draw near; but even now the tree is tottering. Crack! it falls! "Great God, can no one help them?" "What a fearful death!" But no! it hung for an instant in the air, its flames playing about his hair as he passes under. Then it crashes to the ground just behind. He is safe! A turn of the road hides him from their sight, and the tension on their nerves is relaxed. "Gallantly done, by Jove!" exclaims Ned, as he mechanically prepares to help the girls, exhausted from excitement, to descend.

Bright and early the next morning our friends are assembled on the porch; for bright and early leaves the stage on which they begin their journey northward. The road on which it crosses the mountain is chiefly formed by the bed of a stream; but in that glorious atmosphere no physical discomfort could affect their pleasure. The end comes all too soon when Wolf Creek is reached, where one of the old-fashioned inn-keepers gives them a dinner far more delightful than the best of caterers could furnish at home. Then comes a trip by railroad, cutting through dense woods, bridging dark ravines, in which, far beneath lie sparkling torrents; then along the Pigeon River, with its miniature palisades; then more woods and valleys, with many a glimpse of distant mountain scenes, that make the resemblance between the Land of the Sky and the Land of the Alps.

"What lovely azaleas! How I wish I had some!" exclaimed Edythe; but the others are strangely silent till Cissie, who has been studying a time-table, says, wrinkling her forehead: "I don't see why they allow so much time between the arrival of this train and the departure of the one North."

"Southern trains are always behind time," Ned began.

"There's another reason, though," said Jack, joining them, after a trip to the front car. "This line likes to comply with all the wishes of its patrons, and we are about to stop for some of those azaleas Edythe saw."

The train stopped and backed.

"You don't mean to say you put them to all this trouble because of my idle words?"

"They were glad enough of an excuse."

Jack and Ned soon returned, their arms laden with the lovely blossoms.

"Now you must try your fortune with one of these. They will just suit you, you are such a mountain maid," said Cissie to Edythe.

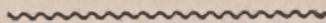
"It's a shame to destroy even one of them, they are so delicious. Besides, you'd name it Jack, as you always do, and I'm tired of trying it with him."

"No, I won't. I'll name it some one you can make a hero of, as you said last night." So Edythe broke off a spray, and pulled off the petals one by one. Just as she neared the end, a sudden draught blew the last two or three out of her hand.

"That's a shame! Now I don't know whether he will love me passionately or not at all. Never mind, I shan't try another. Who was it?"

"A man you must admire; for he is true and tried, that is by fire. The man we saw drive through that one yesterday."

The junction is reached, and soon they are speeding homeward.



CHAPTER II.

THE theatre is just letting out, the curtain has fallen on the last chorus of the comic opera that is now all the rage. It is the winter following the scenes of our former chapter. Among the crowd who are pouring forth come two of our friends. Edward Saxon first attracts our attention. He stands six feet in his stockings and is built to match his height. Look at his face, the open, frank brow, well-shaped head, and firm, determined mouth and chin give signs of a character strong and true; while his dark flashing eyes and jet black hair, betray some passionate southern blood. Nor do these signs belie him. Generous, kind and true, yet his enemies and even more, his friends, know that, though he holds his temper well in command, if once aroused by any meanness or injustice it becomes all but uncontrollable and even dangerous. On such occasions it is his companion who soothes him most successfully. Their friendship is perhaps the result of their complete unlikeness. Jack Harden is as unlike Saxon in character, as he is in looks. The former is an inch or two shorter than his friend, and slightly made; but in his face there is more intellect than in Saxon's. In fact you see power in every feature, in the high forehead, large, clearly cut nose, and wide mouth shaded by a bluish-brown mustache. His eyes, though, were his strongest point; a piercing gray, they seemed, when he looked at you, to see through your very soul. Enough

of his appearance. His character as has been said was the opposite of his friend's. Careful and prudent as a rule, when necessary he was as bold and determined as any one. Loving books, as Saxon did sport, yet in the lighter games suited to his frame, he could maintain his part with some success. A fair cricketer; but a fine, though unlucky rider, it was in all intellectual games that he excelled. The greater difference between them was in his temper; he really had none, though he could assume it, if he wished. Jack was a lawyer; while Ned, preferring an out-door life, was in a railroad leading from Philadelphia, where they lived.

As they descended the steps of the theatre Ned said, "Let's go to the Café Dubois. There's sure to be something interesting New Year's Eve, and we haven't been there for an age."

"All right, perhaps we may be called upon to make ourselves useful by taking some one home."

A walk of less than a block brought them to the Café Dubois, the fashionable drinking saloon of the city. Entering, they find seats at a table with some of their friends, who asked why they weren't at Mrs. Harton's party. Ned answered "Edythe wasn't asked, and I only go to parties to take her."

"Oh," said Bill Paley, "I suppose that is since Gertie went South. You sly dog! I know you. You haven't heard of Harry's little adventure then?"

"No, what is it?"

"Well, the party was given to the great Prima Donna, M'lle Arnot, as you know. Harry had never seen her. Soon after his arrival he was introduced by his hostess

to quite a pretty young girl. His wits are wool gathering, as usual, so he don't catch her name. Wishing to make talk, he asks if she has heard Arnot yet. With a smile she says, 'Yes, and I am not as enthusiastic as most people, her voice doesn't quite please me. How did you like her?' Harry, the fool, thinks he had better run her down, so says, 'her voice isn't much and her face is as ugly as sin,' with I don't know how much of the same sort of nonsense. Mrs. Harton comes up bringing Jones. 'M'lle Arnot, Mr. Jones.' Poor Harry!"

"Well done Harry"—and they all laughed.

They go on laughing and joking when Paley turns to Jack and asks him if he has met the latest addition to Philadelphia society.

"No, who is he? what is his name?"

"Victor Roland. He's a New Yorker, who has come to live here. Every one likes him, he is such a nice fellow. *Parle Du diable et on voit sa queue.* Here he comes."

A medium-sized, well-built, handsome fellow enters.

"Here you are Roland! come join us won't you?" shouts Paley. Roland, coming to their table, takes a seat, he talks brilliantly and they seem to take to him at once. The night passes rapidly. It is well on in the small hours when they break up. As they go up Walnut St., a boy somewhat under the weather, is calling out his own name and those of his companions, who can't stop him.

"How do you like Roland?" asked Ned, when he and Jack had separated from the rest.

"I don't like him at all." "What? you behaved as if you did."

"Policy. I know nothing of him, so there is no use making myself disagreeable."

"Why don't you like him, to me he seems such a nice fellow, and took so much trouble to be entertaining."

"That's just it. He took too much trouble. Never mind, like him if you wish. He's not worth an argument."

"Hold on. You're coming to New Year's dinner with us of course. But come up early. Edythe has some friends with her to receive, and she expects me to stay around and be useful, so come keep me company; there's a good fellow."

"If Gertie were there you wouldn't want me, I understand. I shall be up as soon as I can. Good-night."

The next day opens gloomy and storming, the rain comes down in torrents. While Jack Harden is making his way toward the Saxon's, we will look into the family affairs of some of our characters. The Saxon family is now composed of mother, daughter, and son. Mrs. Saxon lavished all her affections on her children, her whole life was given up to their care. They returned her love as warmly, so for the past few years she had led a happy, contented life; lately, however, a shadow had been cast over it. Her heart had troubled her somewhat, and when she consulted her physician, the dreadful truth came out. Gently and with the utmost tact he told her that she could live but a year or two more, and any violent excitement would kill her. At first she was saddened by this announcement; but her cheerful nature soon became resigned to her doom. Her duty was

done. Her children were grown. Edward, at twenty-five was already well advanced in his profession. He was without any great faults, and would surely make his way in the world. Her only fear was for Edythe, whose youth and beauty would be left without their proper protector; but with Ned to guard her, yet still more, with her uprightness and strength of character to keep her from those pit-falls into which other girls might easily fall, she had little reason to fear for her. So she prepared herself quietly and calmly for her fate. The children she did not tell; for she was unwilling to cast a shadow over their happiness.

Edward has already been described, and we can add nothing, except that between his sister and himself there was as deep an affection as between them and their mother. Edythe, lovely and warm-hearted, was the light and life of their home. Wherever she was, she brought happiness and sunshine. Though this was her second winter in society, gossip had not as yet coupled her name with any man's, and what is more to the purpose, for once gossip was right; a fact of mingled pleasure and pain for Jack. He had known her for years; they had grown up together. He had been in the same class at school and college with Ned. They got in and out of their scrapes together, and stood by each other through thick and thin. Naturally he had seen much of Ned's sister, and a strong friendship had arisen between them. In his case, as the years went by, it developed into the love of his life; in hers—well lately Jack had begun to hope that he might succeed in arousing some kindred feeling. He was just beginning to

work himself into a good practice. He had many friends, and as he began to prove his ability, business was coming to him; so much so, that he felt he might now try to win his love, for whom he could now provide a home.

Here he is at their door, and taking off his things, after a word with Ned, he goes into the drawing-room, where Edythe is alone, waiting for her friends.

"How do you do, Jack? I am glad you came so soon; but I wonder the rain didn't keep you away, it is coming down so fiercely."

"You ought to know I don't mind rain. Though it certainly is coming down now." After a pause, "The heavens seem to be weeping for the misery the year will bring."

"What's the matter with you? You are gloomy and poetical at the same time. Did you have a bad dream or see a ghost last night?"

"Perhaps both."

"Tell me about it. It will pass the time."

"You wouldn't like it; besides—"

"Besides what? You are delightfully mysterious this morning. Come, you must tell me."

Here they were interrupted by the arrival of some of the girls; one of whom we shall introduce particularly, Ada Merton, a girl who has been out five or six winters (she says three), and is skilled in all worldly wisdom, a pastmaster of the art of flirting, and the only one of Edythe's friends Jack did not like.

Cissie Clayton, coming in, turns on Jack. "I think it was downright mean in you to carry off Ned Saxon

last night to the stupid old theatre just when I came to dinner."

"I am sure, if either of us had known you were coming, nothing, not even wild horses, could have torn us away."

"Oh you get out! Ned was only too glad to escape me. I do believe he knew I was coming and went off on purpose. Ever since Gertie went away, he avoids girls, as if we were red-hot poker. It's my opinion he's afraid we might beguile him from her. He ought to wear a placard over his heart, 'all tramps found trespassing on these preserves, will be arrested and dealt with according to law,' though I don't think it would be of any use."

"Then you think there would be too many for the police to manage."

"Nonsense, none of us want his attentions. I hope Edythe will be luckier to-day than Helen, my cousin, was last New Year's day."

"What was that? I don't think I have heard it."

"You know the Walders, who live next door to her, don't you?"

"I am sorry to say I have that extreme pleasure."

"Then you know that never by any chance would they have callers. My cousin had asked a few girls to receive with her. Just after they came, who should arrive but the two Miss Walders. They said they had run in to see if Helen could come over that evening to their house. Helen, of course, had to ask them to take off their things, and stay a few minutes. They did. Their few minutes lengthened into an hour, then two, finally

they stayed all day on some pretence or other, and when the cards were counted, set every man they knew down to their own account. For weeks afterward they boasted of how many callers they had had."

"Good," said Jack, laughing, "that reminds me of the story about a stick, who lived next door to a great belle. They both hung baskets at their front doors. The belle's little brother took a great interest in the number of cards she received. On one of his inspections, he found about half as many cards as before. He couldn't understand it. Late in the afternoon, running to his mother, he told her that Miss Fitz (the stick) was stealing his sister's cards. Sure enough, not having any of her own, she had quietly transferred about half her neighbor's to her basket."

Victor Roland arriving stops for a moment at the door. Ada Merton at once stepped forward and introduced him to Edythe, saying that she had asked him to call there. Some one else at that moment came up to Miss Clayton, so Jack retired to a corner to watch the callers, particularly Roland, who is leaning over talking to Edythe in a most ardent manner.

Bill Paley comes in, and after shaking hands all round, comes up to Cissie Clayton. "Oh, Miss Clayton, how do you do?" (rattling it off at a marvellous rate.) "You don't look as if you'd been up till four o'clock this morning. I suppose you enjoyed yourself thoroughly. How unkind you were to the other girls, it was really mean to them to look so beautiful. What was it that made such an alarming change. You were alarming last night. I was trembling all the time for my poor

heart. If there hadn't been so many fellows round you, nothing would have kept me from popping the question. I can do it with one or two witnesses, but I draw the line on a dozen or so. There were so many, that I grew tired, and skipped off early. I am sure you must have missed me. Yes, of course you did; who can help missing me, the best dancer in the city. The girls here all dance fiendishly; they keep tripping over my feet, and putting their own feet where mine ought to come. Dear me! here comes Ned. How solemn he looks, almost as bad as you are. Say! Halloh! What's the matter?" as Ned slaps him on the shoulder.

"Don't you know that even the express trains can't safely run over seventy-five miles an hour, and you were going a hundred at least; if I hadn't stopped you, you'd been off the track at the next curve."

"He was off the track already."

"There she goes again," said Bill, "if I don't keep talking all the time, she's bound to make love to me. 'Two hearts with but a single thought,' etc. My poor mind can't stand it."

"No. I should think not. I see I must make a truce here, and to follow your example: 'The quality of mercy is not strained,' Bill—you stop your gabbling—and Miss Clayton, you must not lay siege to his heart; it wouldn't do for you to take him away from his crowd of admiring friends. You know he has the privilege of a court jester."

"'A Daniel come to judgment. Yea, a Daniel.' I'm agreed. If Miss Clayton will have mercy on me, I'll shut up."

They have just left the dinner table, and are waiting for the men who are to come in the evening. Edythe, at Miss Merton's request, has asked Roland to come back. Jack and she are alone in a little room back of the drawing-room. She insists on his telling her his dream.

"I dreamt I was in a large open field. I saw you passing by, led by a young, handsome man. You stopped every few minutes to pluck some of the lovely flowers by the wayside. I drew nearer. The man's face was that of Victor Roland. Suddenly I seemed to see behind his disguise a cloven foot, and tail, and when his face was turned away from you, it wore a look of devilish malignity. Ned was near by too. I tried to warn both of you. Ned laughed, and I could not make you hear. He led you on slowly at first, but soon he began to quicken his pace. The stops for flowers became rarer and rarer. At length they ceased altogether; there were none to gather. The path had become rocky; rougher and rougher it became. I could see your feet were weary and shrunk from touching the sharp stones over which you walked. The music which had accompanied you, at first beautiful and melodious, grew harsh and discordant. The country grew wilder and wilder. Great rugged masses of rock overhung the path, as though some fearful convulsion of Nature had hurled them up to threaten the life of any who dared the dangers of that road; still you kept your eyes fixed on Roland's face, with a trusting, loving, happy look. I seemed bound with iron fetters, I strove my best to break them to save you from what I knew not. Ned seemed not to notice your

danger; he too was fascinated by Roland, when, all at once, a dark, threatening pit gaped at your feet. Roland, with a wild, exulting cry caught you in his arms, as though to throw you headlong into the abyss. I shrieked! I swore! and with a mighty effort I broke my bonds. Ned and I sprang forward. There was a crash, and I found myself on the floor, my table upset, the books scattered all about, and a pitcher of ice water spilt over my head and shoulders."

Edythe laughed. "So that is why you don't like Mr. Roland? I know you don't. You are getting superstitious. Come, take that frown off your face, and be nice to him. I like him; that used to be enough to make you do so too."

"It is still. He shall have no cause to complain of my behavior."

The evening is well advanced. Roland, after spending a good part of it with Miss Merton, is again with Edythe. He talks in a most *empresé* manner, and is undoubtedly making an impression on her and she apparently on him. This doesn't suit Ada Merton at all, so she rises, goes to the sofa, and asks if they can't have a song. "I do so love music, and Mr. Roland has a beautiful voice, though of course he denies it. Come, you must give us a song. Mustn't he, Edythe?"

"Of course, Mr. Roland, we all love singing here, and you will give us such a treat."

Victor goes to the piano and begins "At the Ferry." His voice is an extremely sweet and true tenor, and as the last notes die away, "Love will last forevermore,"

silence steals over them, the truest approbation a singer can have; he has carried them all out of themselves.

When Bill bursts out, "Oh! I hope not. I hope my love won't last forevermore; it's so unworthily bestowed, it would break my heart to think it would be carried on to posterity," glancing pathetically at Cissie.

That young lady looks at him stonily and says, "It's bestowed on yourself, of course."

"Not at all. How can you think so? 'I love but thee.'"

Ned, foreseeing a probable quarrel, breaks in "Come, I thought I made a truce between you. You must keep quiet, or we'll send you both home."

Order is restored, and Roland sings again. Afterwards Edythe and Ned sing, and sing quite well. Then they have some old college songs, in which every one joins. Just as one of them ends, Bill begins again, "You have never heard me sing 'My last Cigar,' have you? Edythe, you play the accompaniment, and you all join in, 'Twas off the Blue Canary Isles one glorious summer day.'" (Finding the key too high, he drops to a lower one.) "What's the matter? What are you laughing at? I'm sure that was all right."

"Next time don't skip quite so many steps. You tripped us all up."

"Very well, if you don't like my singing, I'll keep quiet. You don't know what you've missed. It was the chance of your lives."

"I don't doubt it," interrupts Jack. "But there goes the coal on the furnaces, the polite hint that it is time to leave. Come, Bill, we must go. Say good-night; I give you half an hour to do it."

"Oh, Jack, how can you? Just when I was going to give them such a sweet song."

"But you must have pity on them—and on your own voice; you might injure it by singing so much, and think how terrible that would be for us. Do have pity on us, and save your delicious voice."

"I will have pity,

'Soft pity never leaves the breast

Where love has been received the welcome guest.'

and as I am in love, I'll say good-night."

After they have all gone, and Edythe has retired to her room, she sits for a long time thinking over the day. She thinks of Roland, as usual, comparing him with Jack; but not, as with most new acquaintances, unfavorably. Here is a far handsomer man who seems to talk better. There is something so fascinating about his face. Then, how much better he had judged Jack, than Jack had him. He liked him so much, while Jack had let that foolish dream prejudice him against Roland, and he took so many strong prejudices. Then, what a voice he had! Ah! Poor Jack had no voice whatever, while his, his was so sweet and clear. Yes, she will like Roland. Why shouldn't she? Ned and every one but Jack does.

CHAPTER III.

Our friend Cissie is in her atelier, a cosy little place, furnished with all those trifles that a woman of taste knows how to use in improving an already beautiful room. A few stray beams from the feeble winter's sun come straggling in and seem to find her hair the most congenial resting-place. A pretty picture, with her easel before her, her brush and palette in her hands, and her coil of chestnut hair, with a streak of gold about it now, lent by the sun. So thinks Bill Paley, as he stands for a few moments on the threshold, thinking of what would be the most original way of announcing his presence. Before he can decide, she turns, and seeing him, says, "Is that you, Billie? How in the world did you find your way up here?" Then she turns and goes on painting.

"I'm sure I don't know. I followed my nose, as I usually do. If you will look at it, you'll see how I did it. Having heard that this room was up-stairs, I began at the bottom instead of the top, as I usually do. At first, you'll notice, it goes straight up, so I went right up the first stairs I came to; then there is an infinitesimal turn to the right, so I turned to the right, and here's just the same to the left (that big word would be too much for me a second time) then it goes along—Oh! I say, you're not listening. I won't waste my sweetness on the desert air—well, I got here; but I'll have to wait until

you go down to show me the way. That won't be till pretty late, will it "

"If you don't behave yourself, it will be right away."

"So much the better. I can leave as soon as I want without being truly rude. That's a new dress, isn't it. I must give my opinion on that. If I don't like it, of course you will send it back to the maker." He puts a single eye-glass in his eye and begins to stare at her dress. "Well! You're a bigger fool than I thought you, to have a dress like that cut bias, with a watteau pleat in the back."

"And you're a bigger fool than I thought you, to wear a glass like that."

"Of course, that's why I got it. I see all the fools in town wearing them. You all call me a fool, so, says I to myself, says I, faix and I must kape up me charictar, too, so I jist went down the strate and got one. Talking about dress, did you notice Ada Merton's last night? Wasn't it gorgeous?"

"Yes, but much more suitable for a girl of sixteen than twenty-six."

"Poor Miss Merton:

'Gay mellow silks her mellow charms infold
And nought of Ada but herself is old.'

"I can match you there:

'Can any dress find a way
To stop th' approaches of decay
And mend a ruined face.'

"No, you can't. Her face isn't ruined by any means. We've settled Miss Merton. Suppose we talk of some-

thing more agreeable and—young. What's this you're painting?

'Her awkward hand an ugly palette graced
Where shining colors were, I'll swear, misplaced.'

Oh, I see. It's a bedstead, or a poor attempt at one. These brown things are the head-board, foot-board and frame; that daub of white is meant for the pillows, and that mixed up blue coating, with the patches of white, for an old comfortable or spread. Yes, I see, but you must learn to paint better before you try anything so difficult."

"I'll teach you to call my new sea picture a bedstead. Wait till I catch you; I'll pour this all over you." And away they go, rushing round the room. He dodging behind the tables and easels, while she was after him, as hard as she could pelt, with a tumbler of water in her hand. There is no telling how it would have ended, if Edythe had not arrived with Victor Roland. Bill immediately took refuge with her, and Cissie put down her water, coming forward to greet her new guests. As she does so, Edythe says. "I was just telling Mr. Roland that this was nothing unusual; in fact that you two were always up to some mischief when you were together."

"You see, Mr. Roland, what a bad reputation my friends give me."

"Undeservedly, I am sure."

"I don't know about that; but it don't matter. What lucky star brought you two here? I don't believe I owe it to my attractions."

"I had heard so much of your painting and your studio, that when Miss Saxon said she was coming here, I asked her if she would be kind enough to bring me, and here I am."

"I am delighted to see you, and hope it won't be the last time."

"Now that I have found the way, you may be sure it won't. May I look at your paintings?"

"Certainly." Roland walks about looking at the various pictures.

Edythe says, "Cissie, Ned and Jack have seats at the Opera for to-night, and want you to go with us. Mother is going. Come to dinner with us, and we will go down in the carriage together. Jack is to join us there. The Opera is *Trovatore*, and though that thing Dotti is to sing, so are Scalchi and Galassi, so it will be well worth hearing."

"Very well, I'll come."

"You haven't asked me. Now I shan't go with you," says Bill. "I'll go on my own hook. Can I come sit on the steps by you?"

"Yes, if you don't talk through the singing."

"Not talk once for three-quarters of an hour on a stretch, what a terrible penance for him. You are too cruel, Edie."

"Never you mind, I'll do it. 'They never taste who always drink; they always talk who never think,' says some poet. I'll prove that I can think by not talking to-night."

"I won't believe it, till I see it."

"Beg pardon, but, isn't this meant for the rocks at

Manchester?" Roland points to the painting, at which she has been working.

"Yes, but I can't get it quite right."

"I have been there; perhaps I could tell you what you wish to know."

"Could you? It would be very kind." Roland, in a most flattering way, points out one or two mistakes, answers her questions, and criticises her work with so much judgment, that Cissie exclaims: "You are an artist yourself. I am sure of it."

"I don't know whether I should call myself an artist, but I paint sometimes."

"You must show us some of your pictures then, mustn't he, Edie?"

"Of course; it will give us so much pleasure."

"If you think so, I shall do it; but I am afraid you will be disappointed."

"I'll soon find that out. After what you have done, I know you paint well. Would you rather paint or draw?"

"Paint. You don't expect me to do it off-hand, now?"

"Why not? If you are the man I take you for, that won't make any difference. Let me see. What would you like to do? Oh, I know! We have plenty of time; you shall make a sketch of Edith. Come, Edie, sit here, that will be splendid." Roland sets to work while the others keep up the conversation; Cissie and Bill, as usual, quarreling. In a short time Victor has finished his work, which is really quite a good likeness. Cissie is delighted, while Edythe thinks his success another advantage over Jack. During the ten days that have

elapsed since his introduction, Victor has made rapid progress in her esteem. She has continued to compare him to Jack, her former standard of manly character. Day after day she has discovered something, in which he excells him. He not only sings well, is handsomer and more attractive in conversation, but he is richer, dances better, has travelled more, and now he can paint remarkably well, while Jack can't do a stroke. Jack makes another mistake in dealing with women, he has too poor an opinion of himself. Women are very apt to rate a man at his own valuation, providing, it isn't too absurdly high. Victor makes no such mistake; he rates himself at his full valuation, and perhaps more, there, again, he has Jack at a disadvantage.

After the others have seen the sketch, Roland looks at it again, and with an expression of disgust, tears it in pieces, saying, "I was an idiot to think I could do you justice, Miss Saxon."

Jack meets them at the entrance to the Academy that night. As Edythe takes his arm, she thanks him warmly for his flowers; but when she takes off her cloak, he sees there are others there, too. At the first intermission, Victor and Bill come up, the latter, irrepressible as usual, says, "What think you now of our far-famed voice, M'lle Dotti? Her name was once Swift, but she went the pace too rapidly under that name, so she changed it. I'd like to meet her and say to her, 'Nay, now you are too flat, and mar the concord with too harsh a descant.'"

"Nay. Look not at me so wildly. It wasn't me, it was Shakespeare. Perhaps you've heard of him. He was—"

“‘I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedict; nobody marks you.’ Perhaps you’ve heard of that.”

While these two are having their usual tiff, Victor is talking to Edythe. “What a pity, they have not a good soprano,” he begins, “the other parts are so well taken; that tenor, Mierzswinski, has an exquisite voice, if he is ugly, and has an unpronounceable name.”

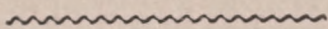
“Yes; but hers is frightful. It sets my teeth on edge. It is just like a tin pan. I wanted to hold my ears all the time she was singing. Didn’t you?”

He leans over and softly says, “No, I watched you; that was enough to drive all thought of her far away.” Edythe colors slightly, and Jack, watching them, grits his teeth. Fortune, however, favors him for the moment; the orchestra begins, so Victor goes back to his seat. Later in the evening, Scalchi has just won a triumph; the house is wild; Bill is jumping up and down, shouting, “Bravo! Bravo!” As the applause ceases, Ned, who has been watching him with undisguised amusement, leans over and asks, “Since when has Scalchi become a man, that you shout bravo for her?”

Bill is nonplussed for a moment; but a happy thought strikes him, and he answers, “I am shouting for the voice, not for the singer. Hers ought to be a man’s, so I shout bravo for it.”

“Then you ought to shout bravo for the tenor.”

“You mean that Mierzflunky? I will.”



CHAPTER IV.

A train from the South is rolling into the Broad Street Station. In the parlor car sits a "wee small mite" of a girl, with a fair, laughter-loving face. Her friends generally look upon her and call her a doll, a plaything; but those who look deeper think they see more. Jack always stands up for her. He says there is much more in her character than her friends give her credit for. "She will astonish all of you some day," is his usual remark. As a natural consequence he and she are the best of friends.

"All beaming with light, as those young features are,
There's light round thy heart that is lovelier far;
It is not thy cheek—'tis the soul dawning clear—
Though its innocent blush makes thy beauty so dear;
As the sky we look up to, though glorious and fair,
Is looked up to the more because Heaven is there!"

Gertie Tremont is a cousin of the Saxons, with whom she has been brought up almost as a sister. She tyrannizes over Ned, who is only too glad to be her slave. Sometimes though she is really cruel, forgetting how much pain she can give.

As the train stops, Ned jumps on the car, and finding her at once, stoops down and kisses her. With an attempt at offended dignity, she draws herself up to her full height, about four feet ten inches, and scolds him: "How dare you, before all these people? I am ashamed

of you. You shan't go home with me. Be careful of that little satchel; it has my cologne and photographs. Give it to me; it is too precious for your big clumsy hands."

Ned naturally asks about her trip, but she doesn't say much. Then suddenly she breaks out, clapping her hands:

"I have it."

"I see; you must have it, to go shouting out at the top of your lungs in the station."

"No, I mean I was trying to think whom your kiss reminded me of. Now I know; it was Charlie."

"Who is he?" Ned begins to look jealous.

"Oh, he's the man with whom I played 'Comin' thro' the rye' in our tableau at St. Augustine. He was tall and good-looking like you, and leant over and kissed me as you did just now. He didn't kiss my lips though; you're the only one who dare do that."

"Do you mean to say you let a man kiss you like that?"

"Of course, why shouldn't he, if he wanted to?"

"What could Mrs. Lane have been thinking of to let you behave so?"

"Why, I am sure you kissed me just now without the excuse of a tableau."

"But I'm different."

"Yes; you mean you're just like a brother." (Ned winces, he don't mean that, yet thinks he had better say nothing.) "He had a better right."

"A better right. What do you mean?" said Ned, truly alarmed.

"I mean to say you're a delightful fool. It is Uncle Charlie Leland, of course. Didn't you know that?" and she bursts out laughing. By this time they had reached the carriage. As she settles herself back on the cushions, she begins: "Come, tell me all the news about that new man who is cutting Jack out, about Edythe, and about yourself. I have heard about you. I know you've been flirting with Cissie since I've been away. Wait till we're married; won't I keep a tight rein on you then."

"When will that be? Make it as soon as you can, dearest."

"I suppose, from what I hear, I had better make it soon or I won't get you at all," with a sigh. "Now don't look as if you were going to devour me. I only said suppose, and now I think it won't be forever and ever so long, if at all." Then to make up for this she talks to him in a charming manner. When they reach home she makes him wait for her while she runs over the house greeting everybody and everything. All through lunch she is in a delightful humor, and doesn't tease him once; after it is over she takes him upstairs to help her unpack, as she says. As she opens her small satchel she takes a photograph from it, holds it behind her back and says: "Here is that picture you wanted so much. What will you do for me if I give it to you?"

Ned, thinking it her photograph, answers, "Anything."

"Anything. That's a go. Here's the picture, and now you must take me to the Mænnerchor. What's the matter?" as she sees his look of disappointment,

"didn't I write and tell you that was my favorite spot at St. Augustine, and didn't you tell me you were so fond of it and would like so much to see it again? So I got one of my numerous admirers down there to photograph it, and this is my reward," beginning to pout.

"Forgive me. I thought it was that one of you that you wrote about. Won't you give me one?"

"You are too greedy," smiling again, "but I'll be greedy too, and give you another to add to your collection, if you will give me a small gold serpent ring. I want one so much. Oh, how I do love you."

"Really, Dollie, if I could believe it, how happy I'd be."

"Well, you may; but spare your raptures. It is the ring I love, not you." After a moment, "how unkind I am to you, Ned, I should think you would hate me. I know how to repay it though. You must go now. Tell Edythe I am coming to take dinner with her to-night. Now kneel down." As he does so she takes up a wreath of flowers, saying: "I'll show you how Uncle Charlie did it." She puts the wreath on his head and stooping kisses him on the forehead, then runs laughing and blushing from the room.

She is right. She has repaid him for all her unkindness. Ned rises and goes away unutterably happy. It is the first kiss *she* has given *him* since they were children.

Later in the afternoon Edythe and Gertie are in the former's room, talking over their experiences since their parting, and making those confidences, which most girls make to their most intimate friends. Gertie is saying,

"I want you to tell me all about this Victor Roland, who is cutting Jack out with you and Ned. I know he's a rich New Yorker of good family, who has come here to live; but what does he look like?"

"He is dark, with brilliant black eyes, handsome, well-built, and of quite a good height."

"A good height! I know what that means, a short stumpy man."

"No; he is quite tall; in fact, about Jack's height with a better figure."

"I don't believe it. You only say so because you have fallen in love with him. I think you have treated Jack very shabbily. His figure is splendid. I like those tall, slim men. You can't improve on him."

"My! what a partisan you are. I shall tell Ned to be careful; he will soon have cause to be jealous of Jack at this rate." Just as she stops, in comes Ned himself.

"What's the row; you two quarreling? There's something wrong here."

"Edythe has been running Jack down; but that don't matter, as I stood up for him."

"No, of course not; but I want to hear something more about Florida. Did you like the Old Fort as much as ever? Have they found any more skeletons walled up? You used to take such an interest in them. Did you see another bear swallow a little pig? How those two things scared you, when you were a small child. Let me see, that must have been at least—four years ago."

"Four! It was fourteen, I'll have you know. I'm twenty, now," trying to look stern and dignified.

"Indeed! How much the child has grown. Let's see whether she is much heavier." Ned picks her up, carries her bodily into the next room and puts her down on his mother's lap, from which place she sits glowering at him.

"Mother, here Dolly has been trying to make herself a Methuselah, and us, believe she can be dignified." They all laugh, and thus he puts an end to what he thought might have been a quarrel between the two girls he loved the best.

After dinner, the bell rings and the servant brings in Victor Roland's card. Gertie, Edythe and Ned go down to the drawing-room. After about half an hour of general conversation, Gertie takes Ned off to see her home, as she says she is tired from her trip on the cars.

Victor and Edythe are alone. As the door closes, he says:

"What a bright, pretty little thing Miss Tremont is. A cousin, isn't she?"

"Yes, and she has been almost brought up here. Her father and mother are both fond of traveling, and when they go off, Gertie comes to stay with us, as a rule."

"Your brother must like that arrangement; he seems very much in love."

"I think he is; but I don't know whether she returns it, she is so changeable; one moment I think she is very much in love with him, while at another, that she only likes him as a brother."

"He is a lucky fellow," with a sigh, "how I envy him such a home as this, fortunate in love, as I think

he is; with such friends, such a mother and—" (such a sister he was about to say, but Edythe rising to turn down a lamp that is smoking, he contents himself with a look that tells her plainly enough what he means.) "How I wish that I were he; for I have no home, no family."

An album is lying open upon the table; and asking permission to look at the photographs, he turns over the pages with a few comments, till he comes to one of her. It is certainly a good picture, so he says, "What a splendid likeness!"

"You think it looks like me?"

"As much as any image could 'whose lips are dumb, whose eyes cannot change.' Have you any others? Won't you give me one?"

Something, she knows not what, compels her consent. Though thinking she ought not, she says, "You can have that one; but 'a fair exchange is no robbery,' I must have one of you in return."

Meanwhile Gertie is saying to Ned, "I don't like Mr. Roland, he has a selfish face. Why do you like him?"

"Oh, he's good company, and jolly; then he sings like a lark and paints well too; he's fine all around."

"What do you care about any man's singing, while you have me? I can sing well enough, and paint too, for that matter."

"Yes, I have noticed that."

"Do you really think I paint well?"

"Yes, quite artistically."

"Why, you used to laugh at me so, whenever I tried."

"I! Never. You get the flesh tint so accurately."

"Oh, come, you know my faces all had a Japanese tinge."

"No, I don't. How many faces have you? You ought to go to the Dime Museum, as the girl of many faces, and the Japanese tinge would be quite a card, as everything of that nation is in fashion now."

"You silly boy! What nonsense! I am talking of portrait painting. Do you remember the one I painted of you?"

"The one where you made my mouth so greedy, that my ears could only hang on by their eyelids to the back of my head? Well, I'll never forget it."

"Never mind, if your mouth was rather large and your eyes looked as though they had had a fight and were trying to get as far apart as possible, I made it up on the nose; the nose was far handsomer than yours, that made things even, so it looked very much like you."

"Yes, it was my very image."

"Well, then, how can you like Mr. Roland?"

"Doesn't every one speak well of him?"

"Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you." Then with beautiful inconsistency, "but Jack don't like him and Jack's always right."

"The exception proves the rule; he is mistaken this time."

"That's just like you men. You're all fickle. Here you are giving up your oldest friend for an almost perfect stranger. I am ashamed of you! Go away! I won't have anything more to do with you."

"I can't very well leave you in the middle of the

street, and I want to say this: You are altogether wrong. I wouldn't give up Jack for anything in the world; as long as I live he shall be my friend."

"Well spoken, Ned, and I'll forgive you; but don't you think Edythe is falling in love with Mr. Roland. If she does, it will spoil my dream. She was to marry Jack, and we four were to live happily together."

"We may yet. If you wish it, I would like nothing better."

Edythe herself could not have answered the question; was she in love with Victor? Sometimes she thought she was, at others not. When he was with her, she was sure she was, his eyes fascinated her so; and when he was singing, how he charmed her, how he carried her far away from everything about her. Did he love her? Could she doubt it? When she saw him look at her so, it must be true. Ah! How happy she was! Loving and beloved! But then did she really love him. At such moments Jack's face would appear before her. She would think of all their past, and she was sure she loved him best; then Victor's eyes would come again, and all was doubt once more.



CHAPTER V.

A couple of weeks pass by, with their usual round of gayety. Theatre parties, dinners, balls, follow each other in quick succession. Victor is constantly seen at Edythe's side; though he pays Miss Merton some attention. He has become quite the fashion, and is asked everywhere. Jack too, contrary to his wont, goes to many parties now, and the two are open rivals. Society cannot decide which is the most successful; sometimes thinking one, sometimes the other. Victor feels sure of winning her, and is playing a bold game. Jack, less confident, nevertheless often thinks that he will win; she is always so kind and gentle, even more so than usual; though sometimes he thinks this is a bad sign, feeling that she would be more capricious, if she really loved him. The truth was, she feared that some day she might cause him great pain, and wished to make it up to him beforehand; besides, she liked and admired him so much, she could not be unkind to him. She was still undecided as to which she was in love with.

To-night, Ada Merton is giving a ball; not one of the typical Philadelphia crushes, where two or three hundred people are crowded into two small parlors (they cannot be called drawing-rooms) and a narrow hall.

"She who invites

Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And dreads their coming; they—what can they less?—
With shrug and grimace hide their hate of her."

No, hers is a small dance of about thirty girls and twice as many men, in a large house, with ever so many quiet nooks for the flirtatious. While down-stairs, three large rooms are thrown into one, and Herzberg is playing those delicious waltzes, that frequenters of Bryn Mawr know so well. Altogether everything that can be, has been done to make the guests enjoy themselves; for Miss Merton's long experience has not been in vain; her parties are always thoroughly enjoyed.

Entering the dancing-room, she meets Victor, who is looking at the dancers. "I suppose you are comparing our modest attempts at gayety, with those grand affairs of your own city. I fear we suffer much from the comparison."

"No, if I were comparing the two, it was to think in how much better taste everything was here."

"You have to say that, politeness bids you."

"You are wrong again. I say it because I think it. With us everything is money. When we give a ball, each tries to outshine the other; the result is a most gorgeous display without the slightest taste."

"Then you think our entertainments surpass yours in some things?"

"In all things, except money misplaced, lavish vulgarity. I can say more. Your Assemblies are as handsome as any balls I have ever seen, and I have been in London and Paris. Except in the latter city, I have found nowhere such an entertainment as this; everything, the music, the flowers, the floor, is in perfection."

"You must not leave out the men. What beauties they are! So tall and fine looking! If we could only import some more of you New Yorkers."

"Yes, I agree; your men don't amount to much in looks; but then the girls make up for that. You have the prettiest collection here to-night that I ever saw, not even excepting our New York girls, who are a very pretty lot."

"I flatter myself, we have a pretty set here. What a combination! With you New York men, and these Philadelphia girls, we could defy the world."

She is called off at that moment; so Victor seeing that Edythe has stopped dancing, goes up to her. Jack has not been invited here, so he is happy. "Won't you give me a little turn?" he says, as Herzberg begins *Mon Rêve*, Waldteufel's latest. Victor dances superbly; a long, swinging, gliding step, passing in and out among the couples without apparent effort, and never touching one of them. Edythe dances as well, and, as they seem to float about the room, many are the admiring, envying glances cast in their direction. They dance the whole waltz through to the very last note. The room is quite warm; so instead of holding her right hand, Roland fans her with his left, making his fan keep time to the music. As they stop, she murmurs, "What a perfect waltz; if Waldteufel had composed nothing else, that alone should make him immortal."

"He should indeed be blest; I could have danced on forever then. But you must be tired; won't you come out here to rest?" So out they go, retiring to a convenient corner.

"Won't you give me one of your roses?"

"Since you sent them, of course I will."

"If that is the only reason you give it to me, I do not

want it." His face assumes so disappointed an expression, that the thought of Jack, which led her to say what she did, completely disappears. She selects the prettiest of all her buds, and leaning over to fasten it in his coat, whispers "I was too cruel, I did not mean that. Forgive me, won't you? And wear it for my sake?"

"I would do anything for your sake. But you must forgive me, it was my mistake; I presumed too much."

Wishing to change the subject, she says, "How good it is of you to be always sending me roses; you know I love them so much. It must be so much trouble, though."

"Trouble! Nothing can be trouble that I do for you."

"I don't know how I can repay you for all your kindness; it distresses me sometimes."

"Does it?" with a faintly murmured "darling. Never let it do that. Some day I shall tell you something that will repay it all; but for the present, set it down as but part of the homage all men must pay to beauty such as yours."

A little earlier Bill Paley came up to Cissie, and exclaimed: "I suppose you have been having your head turned by all the sweet things those fools have been saying to you.

'What honor that
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries.' "

"There you are quoting again. When will your stock run out; it seems inexhaustible."

"It is, or pretty nearly so."

"I should think you would like to say something original, and not be playing copy-cat all the time."

"That's just where you are wrong. As you all say, and I agree with you, I haven't sense enough to say anything witty myself. As conversation should be the reciprocal play of wit, I learn all the good things the poets have said before me, and thus I play my part. Halloh! What's Roland doing? He's fanning and dancing at the same time. I must try that, too. Come, Cissie, let's trip the light fantastic."

"And get myself killed. Not much; I have danced with you before."

"Oh come. I have really learned to dance now. Try me. 'Oh, Cissie, come try me.'"

"If you have really learnt, I will; but don't bump quite everybody, please; a dozen will be enough to start on." Away they dash, regardless of time, Bill trying to fan her at the same time. Bump! Bill strikes a girl in the back. He begs her pardon, starts again and strikes another. At last they reach a clear space, when Bill begins to take such queer steps that Cissie, though a good dancer, can't follow him. He cries out: "Why can't you keep off my feet; that's about the twentieth time you've trod on them." But they are in the crowd again, and all his energies are concentrated on keeping clear of the others. His fan is a nuisance; but he won't give it up, and trying to keep it straight is too much for him; he is continually striking some one with it. Many are the men who wish him and his fan in Jericho. Finally he gets it mixed up somehow with another couple, and while he is trying to extricate it, Arthur Scorville comes

swinging along; his partner's train coils itself around Bill's feet, and Scorville happens at the time to give him a slight push; this is too much for poor Bill, and down he comes on the train. Luckily he let go of Cissie, who stands over him convulsed with laughter. True to his nature, he laughs as hard as any one, and then, still on the floor, exclaims with a self-satisfied grin: "Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen." Picking himself up, Cissie and he go back to their seats. "I thought I was bound right through for China; wouldn't you have liked to go with me? It would be such fun to see the men walking round upside down; then just think, we could have all the tea we want for nothing." So he runs on, not minding his mishap one bit.

In a moment or two Arthur Scorville comes up, so Bill, who can't abide him, leaves. The former is a tall, finely-made fellow, with a considerable amount of brains and ability; but who is eaten up with conceit of himself and his family. There are very few in his opinion, who are good enough to associate with him. You can see this at once; he walks about the room with a most supercilious, self-satisfied air. When he approaches Cissie, he begins: "What an ungainly cub that Paley is; he ought not to dance if he can't stay on his feet. It was as thoroughly awkward an affair as it could be."

She says innocently, "Why, I thought you had something to do with it." He stares at her in surprise for a minute or two, and then changes the subject. "I wonder how Miss Merton could ask the Collins here. Who are they anyhow? I never heard of them before this winter, now the girl is going almost everywhere;

their father was a blacksmith at one time, I understand."

"He wasn't anything of the kind. I know Lizzie Collins; she is one of the sweetest and most lady-like girls I know, as well as one of the prettiest; she is a friend of mine."

Scorville listens with an indifferent smile, as much as to say, her opinion don't make the slightest difference, and then says: "If Philadelphia keeps on running down this way, I shall advise my mother to bring my sisters out in some other city." She feels like saying: "What a good riddance that would be," but contents herself with—"There are plenty of nice people outside of our old families, if you could only see that while birth is apt to make a difference, it doesn't always do so. Blood don't always tell."

He asks her to dance, and off they go. He don't take the trouble to look around, dancing on weight entirely, and never thinks of apologizing when he bumps. They dance about, striking several couples, till they come near to where Ned and Gertie are dancing. Scorville has a way of moving his left hand up and down quickly; he happens to have it down pretty low, and though Ned tries to keep out of his way, other couples interfere; the result is, Gertie receives quite a severe blow on the temple from Scorville's knuckles. She is compelled to stop dancing, and Ned takes her from the room for some water. Scorville hasn't paid the slightest attention to her, not even saying "beg pardon," when he struck her, while Cissie did not notice it. They dance back to their seats, and other men joining her he leaves. Soon after, Bill comes back again.

"I suppose he's been tiring you with his old ancestors again. He's always talking of them, or thinking of them, which amounts to the same thing.

'Long galleries of ancestors
Challenge nor wonder nor esteem from me,
Virtue alone is true nobility.'

Speaking of that, Lord Langham wants to meet you, may he?"

"Who is he?"

"Oh, he's an English nobleman, who's here for a short time; he is good enough without much sense."

"Very well, you can present him."

"If he asks you whether there are any Indians in Philadelphia, tell him yes, that there is a connection of yours. He will ask if he can see him, say yes, and arrange a day for it at your house, I'll explain everything afterwards. No, it's no joke on you. On my word of honor it isn't, you can believe that."

"Yes, I can; anyhow, I'll try it." And Bill goes off to find the Englishman.

Gertie has had to go to the dressing-room with a headache, brought on by the blow she had received. She won't let Ned take her home, so he goes back to the dancing room, furious, as might be supposed. Scorville is dancing again. Ned asks the tallest and heaviest girl he knows to dance with him; he then begins to follow Scorville, comes up behind him and begins to rap him on the back of his head. Scorville looks around astonished, but he can't escape; rap, rap, it comes like rain, he has to stop dancing, driven off the floor, and

every time he starts Ned does the same thing; he is fairly kept off the floor. Furious, yet he can't do anything, for Ned's strength is proverbial and every one sympathizes with him; at last he gives up in disgust and retires vanquished, while Ned is met by congratulations wherever he goes. The men tell him, they commission him to do the same at all other balls, and Bill is radiantly happy.

"Lord Langham, Miss Clayton," and Bill goes off with a wink at Cissie. "Charmed me to meet you, Miss Clayton, I have been trying to get—ah—an introduction to you for the deu—beg pardon for an awfully long time, you know?"

"Indeed! I feel quite flattered, that your lordship should notice me among so many pretty girls."

"Yes, you American girls are—ah—quite charming you know. This is a deucedly jolly little affair, isn't it?"

"Yes, Miss Merton certainly knows how to entertain." So they talk on till Lord Langham says, "My friend, Paley (jolly fellow Paley) tells me you have an Indian—ah—chief as a connection. Quite a curiosity. White Beaver, I think he said was his name."

"Ah, yes; his half-sister married an uncle of mine."

"He's the grandson of old Stick-in-the-mud, the Seneca Chief, whom Billy Penn gave quite a terrible beating, isn't he?" Cissie answers with a smile, "Yes and our house is on the very spot where old Stick-in-the-mud was killed."

"Why now don't you see? that's—ah—queer? How I should like to see a native Indian."

"If you will come to our house some day, I shall have him there for you to see."

"Will you really? Don't you know, that will be so—ah—kind. When may I come?"

"Whenever you please. How will day after to-morrow do?"

"Suit me down to the ground. That'll be quite jolly won't it?" Other men come up and she goes off to dance. Ned gets a turn and while he leads her back to her seat, says, "I've come across a good conundrum for you."

"What is it?"

"What is a categorical imperative?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"A term used in praxology to denote the thisness by which the ego determines the otherness of the which. Isn't that a mouthful for you?"

"Where in the world did you catch a thing like that?"

"Jack found it in one of those old books of his. Pa-ley or something of that sort. By the way, I wonder if he was any relation to Bill. I'll have to ask him."

"I would, it will give him something new to talk about."

Victor is with Ada Merton once more, something is said about the neighborhood of Asheville and the Warm Springs, North Carolina. Miss Merton asks if he had ever been there.

"Yes, and I had the narrowest escape of my life down there."

"I can tell you what it was. You had to drive through a forest fire, and a blazing tree almost fell upon you. Now, am I not a magician?"

"How did you hear that? I scarcely told any one."

"A little bird whispered it to me. But no; Edythe

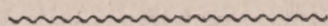
and some of her friends were on a hill opposite, and from their description and what you said I guessed it." As they talk, her thoughts fly fast. If Edythe should hear this, it would probably turn the scale in his favor, so romantic is her nature. How often has she spoken of the unknown hero and admired his skill and courage. Then if Edythe makes up her mind, nothing scarcely can prevent their match. No, she must not know. He shall not tell her. This flashes across her mind, even while she is talking on indifferent subjects.

"Mr. Roland you have often said you did not know how to return all I have done for you. If you are still of the same opinion, I can tell you something that will do so."

"Of course I am. What is it? Anything in my power I shall gladly do."

"It is a simple thing, and you may think it silly. I have a reason, though I can't tell you now why I ask it; but I will in a few months. Promise me you won't tell any one here, that you were ever in the 'Land of the Sky.'"

"Is that all? I promise it with the utmost pleasure, and shall say nothing from which they could in any way infer it. You can take your own time to tell me why."



CHAPTER VI.

Ned has come up from the office early, and is at the Tremont's talking to Gertie. That young lady is evidently very much out of humor about something, for her cheeks are red, her eyes flashing, and she stamps her foot, as she says, "Then you absolutely refuse to take me to the Mænnerchor?"

"Certainly. It isn't a fit place for you to go."

"Who made you a judge of what is a fit place for me to go? Besides, there's your promise, and I gave you both the photographs."

"I didn't promise to take you to the Mænnerchor."

"Yes, you did. You said you'd do anything, if I gave it to you."

"And so I will; anything in reason. I gave you that ring."

"That was for the other picture. So you are going to perjure yourself and break your promise." Ned remains silent. Anger failing, Gertie makes up her mind to try what tears will do, so bursts out crying. "I think it's so unkind of you, the very first thing I ask you to do, you refuse," and she sobs furiously. Ned looks pained, but remains apparently inflexible, so she tries it again. Looking up through her tears, she says, "I know why you won't take me, you're going to take some other girl there, so don't want to be bothered with me. All you men are fickle. Here you've been swear-

ing you loved me, when you were in love with some other girl all the time. I didn't think you could be so deceitful."

"I'm not."

"Yes, you are. I know what I'll do. Somebody else will be very glad to take me."

"Not if I can help it," he foolishly says.

"If you can help it? What have you got to say about it? You have no right to interfere. I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!" And she runs from the room. Ned smiles wearily. "What a vixen she is." But he hasn't changed his mind in any way. He has experienced her tempers before, and knows they don't generally last long. She runs upstairs to her room, only to cry the harder. She thinks how unkind he has been; how obstinate. It was all his obstinacy. She will pay him up. She goes on this way, gradually becoming calmer, till she catches sight of her face in a looking-glass. It is so comical that she laughs heartily, but makes up her mind to make it hot for Ned, and any one, who saw her clench her fist, and shake it at an imaginary somebody, would have felt sorry for Ned. Unconscious of his awful doom, he shrugs his shoulder and goes home.

Lord Langham has just come to see Cissie, who receives him with a warm welcome. It is the time fixed for his interview with White Beaver. She tells him she will bring him in in a moment; but before she goes, says, "You know these Indians have peculiar customs, so you mustn't mind anything he may do." Then with apparent difficulty, "If you should miss something, don't

think anything of it; I shall return everything he may take to you before you leave. You know Indians don't understand the distinction of *meum* and *tuum*."

"How deucedly peculiar! But I'll not say anything, no matter what he does." Cissie runs out of the room and soon returns with White Beaver. He is short and makes himself still shorter by leaning over as though bent with age. Stuck on one side of his head is a white beaver hat; on the other, he has a red and yellow head-dress, apparently of colored hair. His face is wrinkled and covered with paint; where the skin shows through, it and his hands, are a rich copper color. He wears a wolf skin jacket, the hair turned outward, and baggy, greasy looking buckskin trowsers. On his feet are moccasins. About his neck he has a necklace of beads, and one of wampum, which, with a heavy stick in his hand, and a knife and pipe in his belt, complete his attire. Though his face and figure look so old, his eyes have a merry twinkle in them that seems quite youthful. As he enters, Cissie says, "White Beaver, this is the pale face that wanted to see you." Then she retires to the next room.

White Beaver growls out, "How?" and not noticing Langham's proffered hand, walks up to him and deliberately pulls his nose. Langham is naturally surprised, but remembering what Cissie has said, does nothing. White Beaver begins, "The Pale Face has come across the big water to see White Beaver. He is right. White Beaver, he much big Injun, great Chief. His fathers much big Chiefs too, ruled over great land. All this was there." At this, he flings out his arms, as a gesture.

His stick is in one hand, and as he throws them out, it strikes Langham quite a hard blow. He winces a little and rubs his arm. White Beaver grunts, "Ugh!" At this moment the Englishman notices that his watch is gone; but still says nothing except, "I hear your—ah—grandfather fought a great battle with William Penn."

"Oh, yes. Skalowna, he my second father, my father his father. He great big chief. He rule many nation. Pale faces come here. He hear about them from other Injuns. They want treaty. My second father he say yis. Other much chiefs say no. My second father he vera vise. He no want to fight. Other chiefs say yis. Big fight. My second father, he bring much men, he rule many nation. Fight all day. Pale faces have big irons, fire come out, kill Injun dead. Injun he have none. My second father, he fight vera brave, he fight all day. When sun near down, he in this vera spot. He fight much hard. Pale face bring gun, he shoot. Skalowna dead. We run away. Remember well."

"You remember it well? How—ah—old you must be?"

"Yis, White Beaver vera old. Ten ten summers on top of him. He see ten ten freezings go by." Langham's attention is attracted by the Indian's head dress, and pointing to it, he asks him to take it off and let him see it.

"No, no. Pale face look at it here," pointing to his head, at the same time coming toward him. Langham examined it, and then asked what kind of hair it was made of.

"Deer. Big deer with much big horns. How call you him?"

"Elk, or Moose, perhaps?"

"Moosa, that him. Iroquois kill him up North."

"Iroquois? That's the name of that blasted American horse that won the Derby the other day. Quite peculiar, you know. Wonder if it comes from the Indians, or the Indians got it from the horse; must inquire," and he hunts for his note-book to put it down. The note-book is gone. He then feels for his pocket-book. That is gone, too. Really angry by this time, he says: "See here, White Beaver, this is quite too much, you know. I didn't mind your taking my watch and note-book, but you might stop at that. Don't you see it's deucedly ungentlemanly to take a fellow's pocket-book."

White Beaver stares at him for a moment, with a twinkle in his eye; then springing up, exclaims angrily: "Pale face lie. Me no want what him got. Me big chief, own much land," walking up and down shaking his stick. Langham, who is ashamed that Cissie should have heard his angry words, tries to soothe him and at last succeeds. The Indian quiets down, and says: "Me no got pale face watch. All mistake. Pale face—Ugh!" This latter exclamation is caused by the sight of Edythe, Gertie, Ned and Jack standing at the door, listening to what he is saying, and looking at him with the utmost astonishment. "Ugh, more pale faces come to see White Beaver. White Beaver much big chief. How? He steps toward Jack and is about to pull his nose, when Jack knocks off his beaver, catches his wig, and cries, "Hold on, Bill, you can't fool me. Your voice has betrayed you."

Bill, seeing he is at the end of his rope, says: "It was too bad to stop my game that way; it wasn't half played out. Here, Langham, here are your things," handing him his watch, note-book, and pocket-book. Cissie, Edythe, and the others shriek with laughter, with the exception of Gertie, who goes over to where Lord Langham is standing, mouth wide open, looking first at Bill, then at Jack, and then back again, in perfect amazement and horror. She says: "It is too bad, my lord, that Bill should play such a prank on you. I'll see that he don't play another. What did you do it for, Billie?"

"Langham was so anxious to see a real Indian, all alive and kicking. I didn't know where to find one, so I did my best to play the part. I think I succeeded pretty fairly. Skalowna, Stick-in-the-mud, ten ten summers on top of him—Oh, Lord!" and he roars with laughter. Langham is evidently mad, so Gertie says: "Lord Langham is a friend of mine, so you must promise me not to do anything of the kind, again. Won't you?"

"All right, I promise."

She goes up to the Englishman, lays her hand confidently on his arm, and looking up at him, asks: "Don't you remember me? You must forgive Bill for my sake. He is not really responsible for his actions. He won't do it again, as you are under my protection now. You, Bill, had better go and get rid of your outlandish rig." Bill goes off, while the others try to pacify Langham. His ill-humor vanishes before Gertie's smiles, for she is unusually cordial, flatters him most outrageously, and laughs at all his poor jokes. My lord is delighted. He

is very susceptible, and as his latest idol has just been shattered in Cissie (for he can't get over her part in Bill's joke), he is quite ready for a new one. She takes him away to show him a picture; Ned and Cissie go off together to enjoy Bill's latest, so Edythe and Jack are left alone together. Jack asks about the Mertons' party.

"Oh, it was delightful! You ought to have been there. The floor was perfect, and Herzberg played that delicious, dreamy music you love so well."

"Don't, please, don't tell me of the pleasure I missed; but rather of yourself. How did you enjoy it?"

"I had a very good time, but I missed you; it is a shame you weren't asked."

"I am glad I wasn't. I don't like Miss Merton, yet I should have longed to go, as you were to be there."

"Well, I should have made you go. But come, tell me something of yourself; how is your business? You haven't told me of it for ever so long?"

"I thought it would bore you."

"Bore me? How could anything that concerns you bore me? I'll play father confessor. I want to have one of those confidential talks we used to have."

"Where shall I begin?"

"How is your practice; has it grown much?"

"Yes, decidedly; I am only waiting till the ending of one suit, to feel perfectly independent. Then I will—never mind I shall tell you then."

"How is your connection with the —— R. R. coming on; you were so hopeful about it when I last talked with you?"

"It has far exceeded my expectations. I have the run

of most of their business now. I'm afraid, though, it will prove rather a bore in one case."

"What is that?"

"They think I ought to go South to attend to some business for them, when there isn't any earthly use in my going; but of course if they want me to, I shall have to go."

"When will that be?"

"Pretty soon, I fear."

"That's too bad; we will miss you so much, all of us."

"If I could be sure that you would miss me, it would go far toward consoling me for being away from you."

"Then be sure, for I shall miss you very, very much."

Here they are interrupted by the return of Ned and Cissie.

Gertie is saying to Langham, "I hope your lordship is pleased with America?"

"Ah, yes, America's a jolly little place. You have such deucedly pretty girls here, you know."

"You think so? That is flattery, indeed, for a man of your experience must be a good judge of beauty. I thank you on their behalf."

"Don't—ah—mention it. It is only what you deserve; you certainly do take the shine out of our English girls, though it would be quite hard to take it out of their red cheeks. Ha! ha! ha!" He laughs as though he had said something unusually bright. Gertie, the hypocrite, laughs too, and looking naively up at him, says: "How clever you are, Lord Langham, now I couldn't have said that if I had thought over it from now till doomsday."

"Oh, really now, you could, you know, if you'd only try; it's so easy."

When she says good-bye, she gives him a pressing invitation to come to visit her; Langham, of course, accepts.

Ned is disgusted, and on the way home, asks: "Dolly, where did you ever meet Lord Langham before? You didn't tell me you knew him."

"Didn't I? I thought I had, but it don't matter. Why should I tell you everything?"

"Where did you meet him?"

"On my way from the South, he had a section opposite ours in the sleeping car. I had some trouble about my trunks. He heard it, asked if he could do anything, then flew around making such a fuss, that I soon got my trunks. He made them hold the train so they might catch it. Then he came all the way to Baltimore, so you see I saw quite a little of him."

Ned is in a particularly bad humor this afternoon, so he foolishly asks, "And you let him talk to you all the way home without an introduction?"

"I don't know that he talked all the way home, but after what he did for me, it would have been absurd prudery. I know what's the matter with you; you are jealous, you know you are. Come stop it, it don't become you."

"But I'm not jealous. Only I don't admire Langham; he is a fop and a fool."

"I wouldn't lose my temper about it. I think he is an extremely nice fellow. He isn't as unkind as some people I know. He would take me to the Mænnerchor, if I asked him."

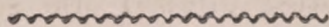
"By all means, ask him then."

"Well, maybe I shall. What advice you are giving me! How you have changed your mind! If you wish it, of course I shall ask him; I always do what you say."

"If you ask him and he takes you, you are both bigger fools than I thought you."

"Thank you, you are very complimentary this evening, but I know the cause; you are so charmed with Lord Langham. Here we are at home. In such a humor you're not pleasant, so I shan't ask you in. Good-bye, Lord Langham is just the kind of a man I could fall in love with," running upstairs she leaves Ned swearing at all the lords in creation. She has already begun to pay him up.

Rather a different parting is going on between Edythe and Jack; for she is saying, "Good-bye Jack. I do hope you won't have to go; I should miss you so much." That confidential talk had brought old times back so vividly to her mind, that she is sure she loves Jack, not Victor.



CHAPTER VII.

Lord Langham is a constant visitor at the Tremont's. He had called the next day and has become very devoted to Gertie. She receives his attentions good-naturedly enough, and certainly gives him some encouragement, particularly when Ned is in the neighborhood. The latter justly incensed, one day complained to her of this treatment. She behaves somewhat better and Ned was at her feet again. She begs him to take her to the Mænnerchor, upon which she has set her heart; but he refuses, so she flirts still more with Langham. At the same time Jack has advanced in Edythe's favor. He had been at college with a man, who had treated him dishonorably. This fellow had afterwards behaved in such a way, as to lose the respect of all who had formerly been his friends. His mother was a widow. On account of some family complications, a suit was brought against her, which, if successful, would leave them almost penniless. No lawyer of any ability could be found, willing to take their case; for the chance of success was very remote, and of a fee still more so. At this point, Jack came forward and offered his services, proposing to serve without pay. His offer was accepted. He conducted the case with remarkable ability, and at last won it, after an appeal, that brought tears to the eyes of many of his hearers. Edythe was present, among a number of fashionable people, and knowing all the cir-

cumstances of the case, could fully appreciate his noble behavior. She was proud of him, and that was the road to her heart. Generosity and uprightness touched her more than aught else. Besides, Victor was not as unflagging in his attentions as he had been. A failure to get invitations to some of the places she went, frequent absences from the city, and Ada Merton's plotting, kept him away. So Jack's star was in the ascendant. He was urging his suit strongly. He goes to-night to a ball with the expectation of seeing her there; unfortunately, when he arrives, he finds she is not well and cannot come.

The ball is given by Mrs. Welborn, one of the social leaders of the strict Philadelphia set. She can trace her line back two hundred years, so sets herself up as a judge of the social positions of the people around her. As is usual with this set, she does not know a sufficient number of young men, whom she considers fit to associate with her daughter. The result is easily imagined. The ball, though given in one of the handsomest halls in town, and perfect in all its appointments, is a failure for lack of men. Between six and seven hundred people are present, but only twenty or twenty-five extra men; so a man must remain with the same girl practically the whole evening. Jack knowing this, looks about for some girl, with whom he can do so. Seeing Cissie he goes up to her. "Good evening, Miss Clayton, will you take pity on me, and allow me to stay with you all evening?"

"Of course, I shall be only too glad to have you; but I am afraid you will soon be tired of me."

"Tired of you! How could I?"

"You may; so you must promise to take me to my chaperone the minute you are." Jack protests that he can't, so they dance, walk, talk, drink lemonade, and then do the same things over again, changing the order for variety.

"Isn't that the March from Prince Methuselah or lem, whichever it is?" she asks as the march for supper is played.

"I believe it is."

"I always get those two mixed up. Let's see; Methusalem is the Opera, isn't it?" Jack smiles. "Oh no, I mean it's the other way, Methuselah is the Opera, and lem is the man." Jack roars. "What is the matter?"

"You had it right at first; but when I smiled you changed it," and he laughs on.

"That was down right mean; wasn't it Bill?" as Paley comes up.

"What?" She explains. "Bully for Jack! I like to see anyone take a rise out of you. But isn't this fearful;" changing the subject with suspicious haste, "it is a regular sticking-place. I shall have to screw my courage up to it, as Shakespeare advises. Did you see my luck? Of course, I had to go and get stuck with the ugliest girl in the room; the thing with a purple body and pea-green skirt, that looks as if she came from the ark. I left her to get her some supper. A fine time I had in getting away too; she held on to my coat-tails to make me stay."

"Not really, Billy, you're joking?" from Cissie.

"She didn't actually take hold of them; but she might as well have. She assured me she didn't want

anything to eat, and almost went on her knees to keep me. I suppose she thought she wouldn't find another fellow fool enough to come near her. I swore it wasn't any trouble to get her supper, and that I knew she was dying for some; so off I skipped. If she comes here you must hide me; it would be cruelty not to."

"Yes, cruelty to children. If she tries it, we will arrest her for attempted child-stealing. I must get Miss Clayton some supper, will you stay with her? though I'm afraid to trust you; you might run away as you did from your other charmer."

"'Nay, friar, I am a kind of burr; I shall stick.' But Cissie, if I were you, I'd knock him down. Comparing you to a caprice in purple and pea-green. P. P. G. I made it a P. P. C. with her." Jack goes off for her supper. Soon afterwards he leaves.

Ned and Langham meet upon the Tremont's steps. Though each is disappointed at seeing the other, they are of course perfectly polite. As they enter the room, Gertie is arranging some pink roses that the Englishman has sent her. She greets Ned rather coolly, the other with, what seems to Ned, uncalled for cordiality. He little thinks it is all put on for his benefit.

"I feel relieved. I feared that my roses might be crushed."

"They are not; but the sender is, you know." At which brilliant joke she laughs. "You see," Langham continues, "I am learning to speak American already." Gertie continues to laugh at his jokes and to talk in a flattering way to the Englishman, almost to the exclu-

sion of Ned. At last she says to him, "I want you to do me a great favor. Will you?"

"I would do anything you asked me, you know."

"Well then, will you take me to the Mænnerchor ball?"

"Delighted, I'm sure. But what, when and—ah—where is it?"

"It is a masked ball at the Academy to-morrow night. It is the only way we celebrate Mardi Gras."

"And it's no place for you to go," breaks in Ned. "Dolly, for my sake, won't you please give up this ball?"

"I don't see why I should do anything for your sake; you have no claim on me."

"Perhaps not, but when I see you about to do something you ought not, I take the privilege of a friend to warn you."

"You are presuming too much. You are no longer a friend of mine; my friends know how to keep their promises and tell the truth."

"You imply that I do not?"

"Yes. You have deceived me and I can no longer believe you."

"In that case I had better not stay in your company. Good evening, Langham," and with a furious face he leaves the house.

Just as he passes into the street he meets Jack, who, seeing that something is wrong, gives up his intended visit to join him. Ned confides all to him, blaming Gertie, and saying he is sure she is in love with Langham. Jack says, "She is nothing of the kind, old man, if she loves any one, it is you."

"A pretty way she takes to show it."

"That is your own fault."

"My own fault? You are an able logician, Jack; but it will take all your powers and more too, to convince me of that."

"Just listen for a moment and I shall try. You are too far gone to know how to treat her. You are her abject slave. Should she strike you, you would kiss the hand that dealt the blow. She knows this, and delights in teasing you. Such complete submission makes even the kindest women cruel. You have put up with her caprices for so long; she is so accustomed to tyrannize over you, that she is completely spoilt. She cannot bear that you should contradict her slightest whim. She is trying to pay you up for your refusal to take her to the Mænnerchor. I don't think she had any intention of going in the first place; but your opposition irritated her. Follow my advice and she will come around. Where women are concerned, coldness should be met with coldness. Don't go back there to-morrow to ask forgiveness, as you would usually do. Keep away from her for a few days. When you do see her, don't be too kind, and if she don't give in, I am very much mistaken."

"But Jack that will be frightfully hard on me. Besides I don't think it would do any good."

"Oh, yes it will. The remedy is severe; but will be effectual. Come, I generally give you good advice; follow it this time. You are blind as love makes one, and I am not."

"I'll think it over."

"You will take me then?" Gertie says, turning to Langham.

"Of course I will. What—ah—time shall we go?"

"You can call at Cousin Clara's, Mrs. Brown's, at about half-past eleven. I shall wear a wig, domino and mask. You won't require any of them. The men generally go without a mask."

Later in the evening she makes him promise not to mention their going to any one, in fact, if necessary, to deny it. This he does readily, and she knows he is a man of his word.

Thinking over the evening after he has gone, she does not feel altogether satisfied with her conduct. When she had first asked Langham to take her to the ball, it had been merely to tease Ned. Carried away by excitement, she had arranged to go; but now thinking it over coolly, she knew she had done wrong. Besides she was sorry that she had treated Ned so badly. But then what right had he to interfere with her actions? He would come back to-morrow as usual to ask for pardon, and then—and then, if he expressed proper contrition, she would give up the ball.

The next day passes and Ned don't appear. She waits anxiously all afternoon for him, telling the servant she is not at home except to him. Supposing of course some business had prevented his coming in the afternoon, she expects him in the evening. Eight o'clock, half-past strikes, he is not there; she begins to be provoked at his being so late. Nine and half-past, still he don't come. She becomes alarmed, fearing he won't come at all. Then she is angry at him, saying to herself he is

rude and unkind. At last she makes up her mind to go to the ball, if he is going to behave so outrageously. So off she goes to her cousin's, saying she will spend the night there; knowing that Mrs. Brown will do whatever she wishes. So at half-past eleven, they start. Entering the room she tells Langham to be where she can find him, if she needs him, and sets out to seek adventure. Arthur Scorville first meets her eye, looking about with his usual conceited smile. She goes up to him, and in a feigned voice, which she can easily assume, asks him, "You are thinking of that long line of ancestors of yours, aren't you? Though from the gloominess of your looks, you must be thinking of the shoemaker, the first of them, or some of your black sheep." Scorville says nothing, so she rattles on. "We will leave such disagreeable subjects; as I am a good fairy, I will give you the very best gift I can, some good advice. You have some ability; but in order to use it, you must know how little it is. You musn't think yourself the brightest, best-looking and best-born fellow in the world. Then to make yourself agreeable, you must learn to dance better. I see you don't relish my good advice, and as I don't care to afflict the floor, I won't dance with you." Away she trips, leaving Scorville speechless with wrath and indignation. She then flits about the room amusing herself with any number of men, whom she knows, and whom she don't know. She tells a fat old Dutchman, whom she hates, she had just seen a young man kissing his wife.

"Mein frow! Mein Got! vere vas dey? Mein frow here? Mein Got unt himmel!"

"Come this way and I will show you." Off she goes, hurrying as fast as she can. She takes him up three flights of stairs, till he is panting so she takes pity on him, and running away leaves him completely used up; ejaculating, when his breath will allow him, "Mein Got unt himmel—mein frow—here." When she comes down again, she meets Bill Paley, who is all smiles.

"Why so pensive, foolish knight; thinking perchance of Cissie, how unkind she was at your last meeting or how you will pay Hughes and Muller their next bill or of that Braley affair?"

"Who the mischief are you?" exclaims Bill, rather startled.

"Some one who knows you by report alone." Bill, who is not as straight as he might be, says,

"Dearest maiden dance with me?

Wilt thou refuse me? Can'st thou not choose me?" etc.

I forget the rest; but come, you must waltz with me."

Fortunately the floor at that moment is comparatively clear. Gertie, who dances remarkably well, succeeds in keeping him straight, and preventing many bumps. When they stop, Bill remarks: "That is by far the best dance I have had this evening. 'There was a star danced, and under that was I born.' Beauteous maiden, thou, who burst upon my enraptured view like the sun from behind a crowd (becoming rather mixed) a crowd—a crowd of what?—oh, well a crowd of devils, if you wish; what are you?"

"I am a fortune-teller. Shall I tell yours?"

"By the great horn-spoon, you shall. Here is my hand."

"I need not that, I can read it in your face. First, to obtain more credit, I shall tell you something that has already happened. You know an English nobleman. You have made him angry; by a joke, a practical joke. Let me see, you pretended to be an Indian."

"I must find out who the devil you are. I shall take your mask off." He tries to do so, but Gertie runs away; he follows. Right by one of the boxes, she disappears from his sight. Looking up he thinks he sees her in the box. To his drunken mind, she seems to have jumped into it. Resolved not to be outdone by a girl, he tries to dive into the box. A scramble, then a tearing is heard, his trowsers have caught on a spike; we shall spare the details.

Gertie ran into one of the corridors to escape Billy, as she is hurrying through it, a young fop catches her arm, and whispers: "Give me a kiss, you beauty, just one?" She rushes away from him, only in turning a corner to fall into the arms of a drunken man, who is leaning against the wall. He immediately throws his arms around her, exclaiming: "What a splendid ball!" She struggles fiercely and succeeds in getting away from him, at the same time giving him a push that lands him on the floor. Disgusted with herself, the ball, and everything else, she hurriedly finds Langham and makes him take her to her cousin's. On the way she says nothing except good-bye, and her thanks, at parting, for his care of her.

Victor and Edythe are returning from a dinner at Ada Merton's. She comes home with him, as Ned was

not invited. Arriving they find Jack awaiting them; he tells them that Ned has been called away on business, and that Mrs. Saxon had been suffering from a headache, but was now asleep. The Doctor said that on no account should she be disturbed; he only waited to tell Edythe this. As he leaves, a pin on the threshold attracts his attention. Perhaps it was because of a desire to linger for a moment longer in her presence; at any rate he stops to pick it up. While he is stooping he hears something about going to the Mænnerchor; without more thought of it he makes his way home.

When Gertie reaches her room, she throws herself on the bed and bursts into a flood of tears. Her evening has been a perfect failure; she had gone to spite Ned, and she thought of him all the time she was at the ball. It had not come up to her expectations; she had not enjoyed teasing Bill as she anticipated. Then those two fearful men, how disgustingly they behaved; but then if she had not gone, they could not have done so; it served her right for being at such a place. How could they know she was a lady? Ned was right; but if he had only come that day, she wouldn't have gone. She had insulted him dreadfully, he might not forgive her, and then—She cried herself to sleep, that night, poor child.

At the same time, in another part of the town, Edythe is leaning out of her window gazing at the moon-lit garden. Her hair is down, giving, as it were, a dark brown framing to her perfect face. Her refined classical features stand out clearly and coldly in the pale light. A critic might have said, too coldly, were it not for the

happy smile that softened and lit up her firm, well-formed mouth, and the soft, dreamy light that shone in her eyes, whose color none could tell. Changeable at all times, to-night they were a deep, rich brown, shaded by a wealth of curling lashes. Would that I had a poet's pen, or an artist's brush, to paint Edythe as she rests there to-night clad in white, the emblem of purity, a sight once seen, never to be forgotten. She is dreaming of Jack—her gentle, noble, manly Jack, in his sense of honor, his chivalry, his power—a man indeed. Her dream of him is as one of the knights of old, his every thought and action was as the noblest of them all. She thought of the old legend, of a maiden cruelly imprisoned in a dark dungeon; of the knight who bravely fights and slays the tyrant who thus imprisoned her. She thinks how much the maiden owes to her champion; what ought she not gladly to do for him, who has perilled his life for her liberty and honor. She thinks how little she can do for him, even if, as the legend runs, she gives her whole heart and life to him. Need it be said that in the maid she sees herself, and in Jack she sees her knight “without fear and without reproach.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Lent has come. The time when society's followers take their much needed rest, and try to restore the beauty(?) in which late hours and violent exercise, taken at the worst time of the whole day, have made such ravages. They no longer stay up all night to talk nonsense; but to make up for this, they take their dissipation in the form of church-going. Society takes a religious turn. It may be seen every afternoon at church, all of it goes to the same church in the afternoon, the same church every afternoon. It is curious how far superior this church becomes (in the afternoon) to every other. It is crowded; the rest are empty. Of course there is nothing but the superiority of the clergymen and services, which crowds the church. Then how reverent is the behavior. There is no row of foolish boys in the gallery, smiling and smirking at the girls in the other gallery, or in the lower part; nor does this row hurry out before the services are quite done, so that each may find his own particular star. No. People do not go now because it is the fashion; but because a religious revival returns year after year with the regularity of a clock. Two of our friends are unaffected by this revival. Edythe and Jack. She charitable at all times becomes no more so in Lent. She does not think it necessary for the safety of her soul to go to church every day, nor to go to the fashionable church, when she does go; so she

does neither. Lent is her time for rest and the improvement of her mind. She reads constantly, and has an interested and able adviser in Jack. He is well read, and their discussions on various works are both profitable and entertaining. One afternoon, just after the Mænnerchor, we find them deep in conversation. Jack has been with her all afternoon. Beginning by a discussion of what they both had been reading, their conversation had gradually become of a more confidential character; their voices are lowered; the room darkens, soon it is lit by naught save the flickering light of the wood fire blazing on the hearth. A feeling of restful happiness steals over Edythe as she listens to Jack. The darkened room, the ruddy, waving firelight add but a charm to his words. If speech alone could win a heart, his words that evening must have done so. In a low, mellow voice, he spoke of many things, breathing such nobility, such uprightness of purpose and thought, such clear, thorough understanding of every subject, that her whole heart went out to him. Now Jack! Now is the time to speak; she at last will hearken to your suit. Perhaps he feels it. At all events he leans over, even closer to her, and speaks still more softly. They are talking of Victor, when Jack says in a very low tone: "Darling, I thought you were forgetting your old friend in your liking for the new." The front door bell rings; but they hear it not.

"Forget you, Jack, my oldest and best friend?" she whispers, slipping her hand in his, "I never could. I look upon you as"—she brings the word out slowly and with difficulty—"a brother."

Jack presses her hand in his, as he eagerly says: "It is not as a brother that I would wish you—"

"What are you doing here, in the dark?" breaks in Gertie. "I have come to dinner, as I said. But do ring for the lights. You know I hate the dark so."

If Jack could dislike Gertie, he did at this moment.

When Ned comes in later, Gertie goes toward him with outstretched hand and welcomes him warmly, with: "How do you do, Ned, I am so glad to see you; I haven't seen you for so long." To her surprise, for she thought to resume her sway over him as soon as she saw him again, none of her warmth is reflected in his cold greeting. As they sit down to dinner, Jack asks her whether she is going to travel this summer or not.

"No. I believe pappa and mamma think they have had enough of travelling for a little while, so we're going to Bryn Mawr, excepting a little trip in August. I am so glad. We shall be near you all." This last remark is addressed to all of them, but she looks at Ned as she makes it.

"Then they have overcome their dislike to the gossiping place, as they used to call it," Edythe remarked.

"They think they are too old to be affected by it, and that they can trust me not to do anything to be talked about."

"How little they know you," Jack puts in, softly.

"They know me better than some people I know." Another glance at Ned.

"I don't think Bryn Mawr is half as bad as it's painted," says Edythe. "The young people don't gossip at all. It is only the old ladies like Mrs. Hooker and Mrs. Johnson, that do."

"I have never heard them say anything bad about any one."

"They know you wouldn't believe it, Mrs. Saxon."

Edythe and Jack are in the brightest of humors; they seem overflowing with wit. Gertie is gay by fits and starts, while seeming to wish to ask Ned's pardon by indirect hints. He on the contrary is very silent, pretending not to see these hints. Jack, at the end of the dinner, his heart softened toward the fair sex, whispers to him, that he is carrying matters too far. Mrs. Saxon, kind and considerate as usual, enters into the gay spirit of the moment. As they move into the drawing-room, she says to Jack:

"You havn't told me what you are going to give up this Lent?"

"That is so. I am going to stop taking prejudices against people I know nothing about, and with your help I hope to be successful. Have the others told you what they have given up?"

"All but Gertie."

"Come then Gertie, tell us what it is."

"Oh, I shall stop flirting." The answer is to Mrs. Saxon, but it is evidently said for Ned's benefit.

"Why I thought that was absolutely necessary for your comfort." Edythe exclaims. Gertie reddens a little and Ned looks still gloomier. Jack to change the subject asks: "Have any of you seen Bill Paley lately?"

"No, why?"

"He has sworn off quoting."

"What?" They all exclaim in one breath.

"I thought that was necessary for *his* comfort."

"He has repaid himself by beginning to write quotations of his own in the form of poetry."

"Have you seen any of it?"

"Yes, Cissie told me about it. I suspect she has something to do with the change. At any rate she has his first attempt and I got this copy from her." He draws a piece of paper from his pocket. They all ask him to read it. When Gertie hears the title she first pales and then blushes; but in the interest of Bill's production this is overlooked.

AT THE MÄNNERCHOR.

There are costumes of every land,
Whose manners we've heard of at all
'Tis truly a curious band,
That graces our Mænnerchor Ball.

But she is nowhere to be seen,
My Nannie so stately and fair.
Her costume is justly a queen—
Yet stay—Who is that over there?

There's a form and a dress I should know,
And I get a glance at her cheek,
(Whose softness to many brings woe)
'Tis her air and her carriage so chic.

She thinks herself to "concale,"
By using a touch of the brogue,
As she used it last night in the tale,
That is now above all the vogue.

She allows me to lead her aside,
As if to obtain some rest.
When there she rests by my side,
And her head falls back on my breast.

As she lies in my arms I thrill

With a wild delirious joy.

Be still, my heart, be still!

Before she was always so coy.

As I whisper accents of love,

She won't believe them, the rogue.

But why, my dear little dove

Do you still use that touch of the brogue?

Does that shaking betoken a laugh?

I do not dare to ask,

Has all her talk been chaff

To see I'll take off her mask.

I draw the mask from her face,

My head is all in a whirl,

For there, in my Nannie's place,

I see her new servant girl.

As Jack finishes, Bill comes in himself, with Victor Roland. He exclaims, "So you have been boring them with my doggerel?"

"It didn't bore us at all. Was it an adventure of your own?"

"Oh, no. It was an invention. I had a good many, though at this Mænnerchor."

"We have heard of your trying to follow one girl into a box. Tell us another."

"Well, after I was repaired, so as to be able to appear on the floor, I returned. The first girl I met, like the other, knew all about me. My friends must have turned out in full force to see my gambols. By the way Roland, I understand she came with you. Who was she?" Roland looks daggers at Bill and don't answer. "Wasn't

it queer. She was so much like you, Edythe, that I would have sworn it was you, if she hadn't been so lively." For some reason Edythe blushes slightly. "By George! I don't believe there was a livelier piece on the floor. We had a high old time. She gave me a pin and made me promise to do something with it. But I'll be switched, if I can remember what. Ah! here it is," producing a peculiar clover-leaf pin. Gertie exclaims:

"Why Edythe that is the one you said you had lost." Edythe colors furiously, Victor looks uncomfortable, Bill exclaims to himself, "Whew! what a fool I was!" while Jack looks in perplexity at Edythe and Roland. Mrs. Saxon after seeing that it bears the former's initials asks, "Edythe how could this have gotten there?" She answers in a hesitating voice, "I don't know." It is incredible that she should have gone to such a place as the Mænnerchor; she so pure in all her thoughts and words, who had never done a single deed that any could object to, never made a single slip, even as a very young girl, at an age, when few escape committing some trifling indiscretion. That she should have gone to a place that even the fastest girls rarely visit, and that too on an evening when her mother was ill, seemed impossible; yet every appearance was against her. Conviction was slowly stealing over them, when Jack breaks in loud and clear, "I can tell you. I picked it up as I was leaving your house, took it to the ball and gave it to that girl, because I could not stay on, as I promised her."

Roland, Gertie, Bill and Mrs. Saxon are much re-

lieved. Edythe looks at Jack with an expression of sadness. She feels it must be true, for he is truthful, he had explained at the same time, why no one else had seen him there, and she had seen him stoop to pick it up. Yet how unlike him to carry off anything of hers and give it to some one else. Could she have been deceived in him? Could she have been about to commit a frightful error. Carried away by her abhorrence of anything mean or false, and rendered more bitter by finding him but clay, whom she had looked upon as in his treatment of women, almost perfection, however lacking in accomplishments, she forgot all that he had done for her and would scarcely look at, or speak to him. His position was anything but comfortable; and he was just about to leave, when a telegram arrived telling him, he must go South at once on railroad business. So off he went without his answer from Edythe.

Victor Roland, at all times fascinating, to-night seems to be making up for lost time. His voice is simply wonderful, in its sweetness. While in his eyes there is the look of a man, who is playing a bold, but winning game. Can any one, who has seen that expression, doubt that they were rendered far more charming. In everything he is at his best, and all thought of Jack is driven far away. Victor sees how successful he is and it is an incentive to still greater exertions to please. But wise in his own generation, he leaves after singing in his most effective manner Burns lovely song to Mary, beginning "Powers Celestial! Whose protection ever guards the virtuous Fair." When Edythe goes to her room, she lies awake for a long, long time in a waking

dream, a fairyland of light and happiness, the effect of the beauty and pathos of that last song. And when she does sleep, it is to dream of Victor.

Jack was wrong in saying what he did to Ned; for the latter is in a bad humor, and decides to act in just the opposite way, to prove his independence of him. Left alone with Gertie, soon after Jack's departure, he is abominably rude. When she even goes so far as to beg his pardon, he says he don't want any of it in so brusque a manner, as to bring tears to her eyes. This is probably the most fortunate thing that could have happened, for if there is anything Ned cannot stand it is women's tears. Gertie's have an instantaneous effect upon him. All his anger vanishes before them and turning at once, he exclaims, "What a brute I am! Come Dolly, let's be friends again. As for begging pardon, that is my place and I only hope I haven't sinned beyond forgiveness."

Gertie looks up at him, casting a ray of sunlight through the shower, and softly says: "No, I deserved all you said; though I didn't think you would be so unkind. You were right about the Mænnerchor; it was no place for me to go. Yet if you had come to see me the next day as usual, I would not have gone. As you stayed away, I became provoked and went."

"Don't let's talk any more about the wretched thing, I am sick of it."

"Then we won't; but I must tell you a piece of news. Lord Langham has left town and I havn't seen him since that evening." Though this dispute was ended, it was as an entering wedge for others. The outward

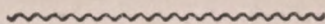
wound was healed, the internal injury was there. Gertie felt herself proved in the wrong, as no girl likes to be; while Ned's confidence in her was sadly shaken.

A day or two later an intimate friend of Victor's, Raymond Van Etten comes over from New York to spend a few days with him. With Edythe's permission he is to be introduced to her that evening. Victor says to himself as he watches his friend making his toilet, "It is about time for me to play my trump card;" then aloud, "Ray, I have been a good friend to you, will you do something for me now?"

"Of course, I will, my boy. What is it?"

"Only in the course of your conversation with Miss Saxon to make an opportunity to tell her of my adventure in that forest fire down South. She was down there and saw me, though she don't know it was I. I am under promise not to tell her; but you will do me a favor, if you will."

"I shall do it with pleasure," with a knowing smile.



CHAPTER IX.

Ada Merton is lying on a lounge in her boudoir. An open book is in her hand. Reading, however, is far from her purpose. She has just heard of the adventures of Edythe's pin, and on these her attention is concentrated. Her thoughts run something like this. "Why did that fool Jack Harden put in his oar? If it hadn't been for him, all would have gone well and I should have been successful. There would have been a coolness between Edythe and Victor; for she must have suspected him. Then her reputation, the prude, would have received a severe blow. How I wish I had known this sooner! However* let me see what I can do now. Edythe and Jack each think the other at fault, and so there is a falling out. Though I hate him, I shall have to help him for the present. Wait till I get a chance at him, I'll make him smart for this and a good many other things. But I must bring those two together again now. I suppose the only way is to disclose, who did it. Yes, that will be best; for she will then admire him and be grateful to him, for taking the blame, and disappointed in Victor's not coming forward. Then I must have Jack back here for a few days. The President of the——R. R. dines here to-night with Victor. Can't I make use of that?" She puzzles over it a little while and then asks Gertie to dinner. Going to the Saxon's she tells Mrs. Saxon and Edythe she has dis-

covered that a servant of hers, whose figure they remember is much like Edythe's, found the pin after Edythe left that evening and took it to the Mænnerchor. Though what is not told is that this was done by her orders, and that giving it to Bill Paley was in conformance to her wishes too.

Jack was sure that Edythe had been at the Mænnerchor. Unlikely as it was, yet he saw that both Mrs. Saxon and Ned thought so, till he took it on himself, and besides what they knew, he had heard her say something about going there. It must be confessed that he felt pretty blue. She had in no way shown him, that she recognized the service he had done her, while he felt that as long as things remained as they were Mrs. Saxon and Ned would at least feel very much disappointed in him. It was in this frame of mind that his mail surprises him. It contains four letters all in familiar handwritings. Edythe's, Ned's and Mrs. Saxon's all express their admiration and gratitude for what he did. The fourth runs as follows:

Philadelphia, March 23d.

Dear Jack:—

You will be surprised to see my handwriting. I shan't say more about that clover-leaf pin than that you are a perfect love. I would, but I know all the others have written you about it, so I won't bore you with it. I have another affair to tell you about, even more important than that. I overheard a conversation at Ada Merton's, that wasn't intended for me; but which was so entertaining I must write you about it. From what

I heard I am sure that Victor Roland is at the bottom of your having to go South. He is bound to win Edythe and you are his most dangerous rival, so he used his influence in the — R. R. to have you sent away. The others would laugh at me, were I to say anything to them about this. You I know will believe what I say. I am absolutely certain of it. He has taken advantage of your absence and is ardently pressing his suit. Everybody seems fascinated by him, though I can't see why. Even Ned is charmed with him. While Edythe—well unless you come back soon, I am afraid bad news will await you. Can't you get off for a few days, come back here, and bring Edythe to her senses? If you were here in the flesh, she might prefer you. As Bill says: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder—fonder of the other fellow." But I mustn't joke about so serious a matter. Do come back as soon as you can.

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Bill Paley and Cissie have had another fight, though that is scarcely news, as they're at it all the time. I believe it has gone as far as not speaking to each other this time. I suppose inside of a week they will be just as thick as ever again. There I have written three times as much as I intended and you don't deserve a word of it, since you never write to me. So no more from

Your affectionate friend

GERTIE TREMONT.

P.S.—Be sure to come as soon as you can. Let me know when you are coming and I shall try to arrange, so you can see Edythe alone. Surprise will probably

be very effective. Don't take no for an answer and I'm sure she will give in

G. C. T.

As might be supposed, Jack soon arranged to return to Philadelphia for a few days.

As a sort of practical joke Edythe has asked Cissie and Bill to lunch on the same day. Gertie, Ned and Victor make up the party of six. It is so arranged that neither knows the other is coming till they meet at the lunch table. Edythe does not introduce them and they are a fund of amusement to the rest as they sit in silence side by side. It is an informal affair, where they wait on themselves. So when Cissie wants something that is near Bill, she asks Edythe for it and it is passed all the way round the other way. Each one helps himself and nothing is left by the time it reaches her. Bill is treated in the same way and they are continually chaffed. Remarks such as "How nice it is to have them together, as their looks and suits match so well." "Whether Bill sent her the flowers she wore." "How pretty Bill's scarf-pin was and who had given it to him." (It was a present from her.) Then Edythe asked if she was going to the Ivy Ball this year. (Bill was to have been her escort.) Finally, Ned is talking about a cut he has received from a girl. Gertie turns to Bill and says, "Suppose I cut you, for I think you deserve it."

"That would be 'the most unkindest cut of all.'"

Cissie forgets herself and exclaims, "Why Bill! You are forgetting—Potatoes please, Mr. Roland." But the shouts of laughter, and the teasing are too much for her

and she takes refuge in flight to the conservatory. When she is gone they all turn on Bill, quizzing him so unmercifully that he flies too and somehow manages also to take refuge in the conservatory. Finding Cissie there, he says, "Come Cissie, let's kiss and make friends. We must pay them up for this, and I have a splendid plan to do so. I'll say black's white, if you want me to." Cissie agrees to the latter part of his suggestion, though she declines the first. When the others find them they are deep in a plot to pay them up, as he calls it.

After many congratulations on their reconciliation the whole party draws together round the library fire. The storm renders the room so dark that were it not for this, lights would be necessary. Edythe asks Victor to recite the poem he has recently composed. With a few introductory remarks, telling them that it was written about an exploit of one of his ancestors in the Revolution (It loses nothing by his telling) he begins. Outside the howling of the wind and the occasional banging of a shutter or door form a weird accompaniment to the rich, melodious tones of his voice.

THE WITCH.

To horse! Our leader cries.

Each steed gives an answering neigh,
As over the sea the fierce gale flies,
As lightning flash rends the sullen skies,
In one wild dash we're away.

We're down upon the foe;

No time for questioning now.

As reapers in Harvest the wheat fields mow

We cut our way with blow upon blow,

Till victory crowns our brow.

The guns are reached ! They're ours !
 Yet onward a few still fly,
 Their horses urged to their utmost powers,
 To gain where the flag in its pride still towers.
 To be first each gladly would die.

But lo ! In front a ditch,
 That threatening yawns as in our way.
 The foremost their falling horses pitch,
 Except young Roland, who rides the Witch,
 Whom nothing it seems can stay.

He was but yesterday
 The butt of every quip ;
 And now to follow his dashing way,
 The three or four, who are all that may,
 Must ply both spur and whip.

They've reached at last the flag !
 Hand to hand is the deadly fight,
 And one by one each falls from his nag,
 Or is forced on headlong over the crag,
 A hundred feet in height.

Till Roland is alone,
 Opposed to all of the foes.
 He's down ! Comes from us as a fearful moan.
 But no ! From his horse their Ensign he's thrown.
 Right through their line he goes.

For life or death the race !
 He waves their flag in his hand.
 Every nerve is racked in that deadly chase.
 Hurrah ! for the Witch still sets the pace.
 Hurrah ! for he's gained our band.

This piece, read as only the author could read it, since it was Roland, and with all the accessories of light, sound

and place, produced an effect on his hearers, that a much finer poem could not, when unattended by such favorable surroundings. Ned, who had been hesitating in his friendship for Victor, because of Jack's opinion, was completely carried away. Like many another man of ability, he had a great admiration for what he could not do. As even the merest doggerel was beyond his power, any one, who could even rhyme was sure of his admiration. From this time there was no doubt of his liking for Victor.

That evening Jack, as Gertie promised, finds Edythe alone. Without the clouds that have been threatening all day, have burst and are pouring their floods upon the streets. Within, even while she thanks him again, for his conduct about the Mænnerchor he finds her reception of him remarkably cold and embarrassed. The glare of the gas makes it seem still colder and he cannot help contrasting it with the last few hours he had spent in that same room. Nothing daunted, in answer to her question, "What had brought him home so much sooner than he expected?" he says "I have come back to tell you what you must already know. I love you, Edythe. Will you be my wife?" He is standing before her, looking eagerly at her downcast face. As she hesitates he instinctively feels there is no hope. Drawing himself up he stands firm, bravely awaiting the hardest blow of his life. Contending emotions are struggling in Edythe's breast. So long continued is the struggle, that to Jack awaiting the death-blow of all his hopes, it seems almost a century, before she raises her eyes to his with a resolute look, though tears are streaming from them. "Jack,

I am engaged to Victor." The last ray of hope dies within him. It was as he feared. "But don't let this interfere with our friendship, Jack. I could not do without you." And she extends her hand. Not noticing it he presses his hand to his forehead and, with a voice in which his resolute will well nigh suppresses the agony he feels, says, "Give me time. I must realize it first. I must go away for a little while," passing out into the night in a sort of dream. The rain and wind beat unperceived against his burning brow. On and on he walks little heeding where.

When Jack is gone, Edythe stands for a moment in a daze; then goes slowly upstairs, where she flings herself upon the bed. Her heart is crying out: Why had he not spoken before? Why had she not known? Her mother comes to her and wisely guessing what has happened, soothes and pets her, as only a mother can, till she again becomes quiet. How unfortunate are those, who have never known a mother's patient care, who always seems to know when to speak and when silence is best, that lightens every grief by timely sympathy. In sorrow, sickness or need a mother is our best and surest refuge.

It is true. Victor has at last won his heart's desire. Van Etten had successfully performed his task, and the knowledge of Victor's identity had had fully as powerful an effect as Ada Merton had feared. She worshipped him now as a hero. Taking advantage of Jack's absence and want of favor, he has wisely chosen his time and carried away by his fascinations he has won her consent. Mrs. Saxon, concealing her preference for Jack,

had yielded. She knew nothing but good about him and she was glad to see her daughter settled in life. Ned had not as yet been told; but when he was he was perfectly content. Had he known of Jack's disappointment, he would not have been so ready. With a brother's blindness, he thought Jack's liking had never gone beyond that. Gertie, alone of the family, was not pleased. Her allegiance to Jack was unshaken and it was only one more reason to dislike Victor, that he had been his successful rival. The news of the engagement was disagreeable to another of our characters, Ada Merton. It intensified her dislike for Edythe into the deadliest hate, which was hidden under a show of extreme cordiality.

Jack meantime had gone back to his work and his visit to the City was only known to Mrs. Saxon, Edythe and Gertie. Instead of like many another allowing his sorrow to overwhelm him or overwhelming it with drink, he overcame it by hard work. So successful and industrious was he that on the retirement on account of illness of the senior lawyer at work in the matter, he was given entire charge of the business. The promptitude and ability with which he conducted it, led to a speedy decision in their favor. Thus one more feather was put in his cap. Hard work in his case proved once more a cure for troubles of this kind and when at Easter he returned to Philadelphia, he was able to act as if nothing had happened. His conduct toward Victor was all that could be desired. He treated him as he would have treated any one, who was soon to be the husband of his most intimate girl friend.

CHAPTER X.

As might be expected, Victor was anxious for an early marriage. To the surprise of the others, Mrs. Saxon was also, so that it was fixed for early in June. One afternoon just before Easter, Victor has come to see Edythe. He brings her two letters, the first of which runs, as follows:

My Dear Victor:

I have just received your letter telling me of your intended marriage. How happy I am, I am sure you must know. That she is worthy of you, your description and your excellent judgment leaves no doubt. My best wishes for the happiness, which you, my boy, so well deserve, are yours;

* * * * *
 * o * * * * * It is scarcely needful for me to remind you of your promise, since I know that as far as it lies in your power, you will do what you can to fulfil it. I have written a line or two to your lady-love asking her consent. I enclose them in this letter and hope you will take the first opportunity to deliver it to her. Before you do so tell her of our connection, why I am so anxious to perform the ceremony, and if you add your entreaty, she must consent, if she is worthy of my adopted son. Blessings be upon her and you. May your life be as happy as can be wished by

Your lifelong friend

George D. Dixon.

"Why Victor! what does he mean?" asks Edythe with a puzzled expression.

"If you think you can listen to rather a long and uninteresting tale, I will tell you."

"A tale is never uninteresting when you tell it, so make it as long as you choose."

Victor begins. "About twelve or thirteen years ago, I went to spend my summer holidays with an Uncle, who lived near the Village of R. in Kentucky. My Uncle and Aunt were not particular about my whereabouts, so I had a free foot to roam, whither fancy led me. Soon after my arrival, in one of my walks, I was attracted by a pond, that lay hidden, deep in the woods. Huge pine trees grew close down to the water's edge casting their shadows upon the dark water, yet the air circulated freely among them. The cooling winds brought with them the aromatic scent of the pines and of the lilies which luxuriantly covered the pond. Birds singing in wanton sport and squirrels chirping showed that this was a spot hallowed by the rarity of man's presence. As I neared the water, enjoying the refreshing breeze and the delights of sound, smell and sight, I saw in the centre of this miniature lake a little girl of probably 10 or 11 years of age. She was in a tiny row-boat and, when I first saw her, was leaning over trying to gather some of the lilies. From the way in which the boat rocked and the exertion she was making to pull the flowers from their stems, I was sure that an accident would happen. Afraid to shout, for fear of startling her and bringing about the upset, I hastily threw off my coat and shoes, to be ready for anything. As I anticipated, a few

more rolls, and the boat went over, emptying the girl into the pond. Just as it did so, I plunged into the water. The distance was short, so it took me but a few seconds to reach the place; though each second seemed an hour. She had not come up again, when I reached the spot, and looking down, I saw her clutching with her little hands the stem of one of the lilies. I dove at once; yet so strongly was she holding to it, that I had to break the stem to get her away. She had not lost consciousness, when I brought her to the surface, and never having had any experience with a drowning person, I was not as careful as I should have been. She clasped her arms around my neck so tightly, that I could not breathe. Fortunately I had sense enough to go right down quietly. When she found me sinking, she relaxed her hold. Coming up again, I was more careful, caught her by her right arm, not far from the shoulder and struck out with one hand. As I wasn't much of a swimmer then, this was a considerable labor; but I succeeded in bringing her safely to land."

"My own brave Victor!"

"Just as I did so, an old gentleman came hurrying down to the bank, accompanied by two maid-servants, one of them middle-aged, looking like a housekeeper. The gentleman, this Dr. Dixon, was so anxious about the child, that he had no time for me. In fact, he insisted on carrying her to the house, which was not far distant. The housekeeper, however, insisted on my accompanying them to the house. There, after I had been made comfortable with some dry clothing, belonging to the farmer's boy, and a glass of wine, Dr. Dixon came in to

thank me. There were tears in his eyes as he said, 'You have done me a service to-day, that nothing can ever repay. She is my all; my only living kin. God bless you, my boy.' He said little Bessie (for that was her name) was doing well now, and then he asked me about myself. I found he knew my Uncle and Aunt well. He had been the parson of the Episcopal Church in that neighborhood for many years. Bessie was his niece, the daughter of a younger sister, to whom he had been devoted. On her death-bed she left her in his charge and since that time, which was about the same as his retirement from the active duties of the church, Bessie had been his only care, his only joy. From this time on I was constantly at their place. Dr. Dixon opened his heart to me, as he did to none other, except Bessie. She was devoted to me, as I was to her. What a dear little thing she was!" with a sigh. "Her cunning little ways won upon all who knew her. I remember as distinctly as though it were yesterday, when, just before I left at Christmas, she came running to me, her hands behind her back, calling, 'Vic! Vic! Open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I will give you something to make you wise.' I did as I was bid and she put this in my hand." He took out his watch, as he said this. "Then she made me open the back of it." Suiting the action to the word, he showed on the inner cover, the inscription: From George D. Dixon and Bessie Leighton, To their friend Victor Roland In loving memory of his brave and noble action June 20th. 186—. On the inside of the outer cover was a miniature of a young girl. Her eyes were a deep blue, very large

even for a child, fringed with long curling lashes. Her brows were exquisitely arched and pencilled. Her small, sharply defined nose, gave her that thorough-bred air, so essential to every beauty. Her mouth was small, with red, pouting lips. A mass of light brown hair, falling in confusion over her neck and shoulders, gave a touch of wildness to her otherwise too regular beauty. But the fairness of her soft, dimpled cheeks, and the dreamy, appealing expression of her large, saucer-shaped eyes seemed too ethereal. They could not but help give the impression that their owner would not long remain to delight mankind by her loveliness. Tears are in Victor's eyes as he gazes upon this miniature and "Poor little Bess" escapes unconsciously from his lips. Edythe is deeply impressed by the pathetic beauty of this little child.

"How you must have loved her Victor! But she looks so fragile."

"Alas she was so." After a few moments of silent contemplation, he resumes, "'You see Vic, I am right,' Bessie exclaimed. 'This will make you wise; for a knowledge of time is necessary to a wise man, isn't it? and the watch will give you that. While this' pointing to her picture, 'will show that somebody loves you Vic, so much! oh ever so much!' and she put her arms around my neck and kissed me." Again Victor seems overcome by the flood of recollection. "I had been spending part of my holiday with them, and that was the last time I saw her in health. I came back at Easter to find her on her death-bed. An old colored servant of theirs had been ill and Bessie was wont to go to her with delicacies she had prepared herself. Coming

home one afternoon, a storm overtook her. And from the drenching she received, pneumonia resulted. She had been cured of that; but the struggle was too much for her tender constitution. She was dying from weakness. When I saw her, I was overwhelmed by the awful change in her appearance. She had wasted away to a mere shadow. The hand she put about my neck was all but transparent, and her lovely face was so thin and worn. The dreamy look in her eyes, that were now preternaturally large, was ten-fold greater. She whispered to me, as I bent over her, 'you have come to say good-bye dear Vic. I can go away now. Mother has been calling for me; but I could not leave without a farewell from you.' Her Uncle had watched over her all through her illness and was so pale and haggard, that I was not surprised, when the doctor told me, he must have sleep. A powerful narcotic had been prepared for him; but he refused to take it and I was asked to use my influence to induce him to do so. I tried. I told him he should not grieve over her early death; but should console himself with the thought, that thus she would never know the world's wickedness and would ever be a pure and innocent child. It was all to no purpose he would not take it. At last I appealed to Bessie. When she learned what we wanted, she asked for the medicine and calling him to her side said, 'Uncle, you won't refuse me almost my last request. Please take this.' She herself, though so weak as scarcely to be able to sit upright, insisted upon giving it to him with her own hands.

She lingered on a few days; till at last the doctor told

us gently that she could not outlive the day. It was a sweet balmy day in early spring. At her request the windows were opened and through them a glorious sunset might be seen. Turning to us, she said in her soft, low voice. 'Uncle I must leave you now. I see Mother up there, beckoning to me. Can't you see her too? You loved her so well. Don't you see the wide calm ocean extending ever and ever so far, I can't quite see the end. Mother is standing on the beach, strewn with those lovely pink shells. A boat is waiting with sails of silk. Yes! I must go now. Uncle you often said that I should be Vic's little wife. I can't be so now can I? Don't cry Uncle dear, I am going to Mother. You must come soon. You loved us both. Vic you can't come yet. I'll never be your little wife; but when you do find a wife, let Uncle marry you. It will make him so happy. Promise me that? I promised. 'Good-bye Vic. Good-bye Uncle dearest.' She was silent. Just before she finished a cloud passed before the sun. The room was dark and still. No sound was heard, save the gentle tinkling of the cow-bells and the occasional song of a bird, singing its lullaby. Then a ray from the setting sun rested for a moment on her face and she softly murmured 'I am coming Mother,' and fell back with eyes closed in seeming slumber; but it was the sleep of death."

As he ceases, tears are streaming from his eyes, while Edythe too is sobbing. There is a long silence, broken at last by Victor. "Now you can see what and why is his request," handing her the other note. It asks in respectful terms, that he may be allowed to perform the

ceremony of marriage. He says that he is unfortunately too infirm to go to Philadelphia; but that, if she will so far honor him, his house is completely at her disposal. He then apologizes for his audacity in asking so much and refers her to Victor for the explanation. "Well love, I suppose it is too far."

"Why Victor how can you think so? Of course I will go."

"But how will your Mother like it?"

"When she hears your story, she will think with me, that it would be extremely selfish in us not to go."

"What a darling you are! No one else could have shown such true appreciation and generosity." We will no longer intrude on the privacy of a lover's tete-a-tete. Edythe was right. Mrs. Saxon made no objection. To the surprise of the fashionable world, it became known that the wedding was to take place in the small village of R—— in Kentucky. The bridal party, of which Miss Merton was one, were to be Dr. Dixon's guests for a few days. Out of respect to the old superstition, Victor was to stay at his own place near by (formerly his Uncle's).

CHAPTER XI.

Our friends are again assembled in the Saxons' drawing-room. To-night they are bound for the Ivy Ball, as the ball given by the Senior Class at the University of Pennsylvania is called. Jack, Ned, and Bill graduated there in the same year, and make it a rule to go to all College balls. When the party set out, Edythe, Gertie, Ned and Victor are in one carriage, Mrs. Saxon, Cissie, Bill and Jack in another. First we will follow the fortunes of the latter. Cissie and Bill as usual are at it again. After one of his sallies he remains silent for a moment or two. Jack, in surprise, asks him what is the matter. Cissie exclaims, "Let him alone. 'He is winding up the watch of his wit; and by and by it will strike.'"

"Wrong again. I was trying to recall a story."

"To invent one rather."

"Have any of you heard Travers' latest?"

"Paley's, probably. We haven't heard it. Poor Travers! 'A thousand scrapes of wit make him the father of their idle dreams.'"

"There, Cissie! you are always getting things twisted. If you can't learn to quote aptly and correctly, don't quote at all. That wasn't addressed to a person, so can't apply here. Then you put in an a, changed thee to him, and last but worst made escape become scrapes."

"Well, you can change it back. I know if you could

change all your scrapes into escapes you would be delighted."

"No doubt; but that is not what you did. There's no use disputing with women or children. I'll tell you this story of Travers. He went to collect his rent from an Irish family ——"

"Are you sure it wasn't a Dutch one?" from Cissie, with an air of the deepest interest and concern. Bill draws himself up in the attitude of a preacher, and says, "Sister, these interruptions are unseemly. Let us have no more of them. Secondly, my brethren, he found them at dinner ——"

"How very interesting and peculiar," from Cissie.

"They were partaking of a bowl of what looked like soup, which stood in the middle of the table; but what surprised him was that tears stood in their eyes ——"

"From onions or whiskey?"

"Ciss am I telling this or are you?" Bill asks, at last really provoked.

"If you haven't sense enough to know when I am talking and when you are, you had better keep quiet altogether. However, I am sure Mrs. Saxon and Jack are dying to hear this wonderful concoction of yours, so I will allow you to go on."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," curtly. "Well, Travers asked what was the matter, why they were crying. With a wink at his wife, the Irishman —— ("Or Dutchman," Cissie murmured) answers, 'Sure an' it was me paig, an' a darlint he was begorry; but won't yer honor set down an' ate a bit.?' Travers, to humor him, sits down and says he will take a little soup. Pat

looks at him for a moment, then saying 'sure enough,' helps him bountifully from the bowl. At the first spoonful, Travers chokes and mutters, 'wh-wh-wh-wh-at d-d-d-amn hot s-s-s-s-soup.'

"Oh, Bill, I have caught you. It is the old mustard story shouldered on whiskey. Here's the University! How lucky for you! You won't have to own up, and you will have time to make up another point for it." As they alight, the other carriage is nowhere to be seen, nor does it appear for some time. To know why, we shall return to the time of their departure. When they started, Victor was telling an entertaining story, so no attention was paid to where the driver was going. When Victor stopped, Ned looked out, and to his astonishment found that they were nowhere near the College, and were driving in a very different direction from the one they should have taken. He tried to attract the driver's attention, but he seemed to be deaf, and could not be induced to stop, till they drew up in front of Girard College. Ned then got out to scold the man, for taking them on such a wild-goose chase. He receives but one answer to all he says, that is, that he (the driver) had been told to drive them to the College, and he had driven there. There was nothing to do but to drive back to the University, which they reached rather later than they had intended, as they had gone at least four miles further than necessary, and their driver could not be induced to hurry on the way back.

Meanwhile Bill had explained to Mrs. Saxon and Jack, that he and Cissie had bribed the driver to take them to Girard College, doing this to pay them back for the teasing, which he and she had received at the lunch.

And there nestles in the ivy,
A tiny, wayward fay,
Who forever o'er my bosom
Will bear her queenly sway.

What a place for a ball is the University, with its long halls to relieve the dancing floor! The numberless rooms with their dark nooks, what stories they could tell of those, who tired by the dancing and the promenade, have sought refreshment there. How many heart-burnings have ye caused, far more difficult to get over than any that come from the purposes for which you were intended. Ah me! Your boys disdain you now, and seek other halls to display their social qualities. It must be supposed they enjoy it. But give us an old-fashioned college ball, with all the memories it brings, with all the mirth and gayety the place supplies. The thought of dancing and flirting, where at other times we must wrestle with the hated logarithms, or sit still, while one Professor turns us inside out (metaphorically) to find what we do not know, or another wearies us to death with his endless gabble. Well, "*chacun à son goût*." They prefer it, so let it pass.

At the University Cissie, Bill and Jack are walking in one of the halls we spoke of. Bill asks Jack, "Do you remember our first Ivy?"

"I should think so. When we were so fresh as to think it great fun to fill Professor Barton's desk with chalk and to mix up all his papers and books."

"Yes, but we got hold of his roll and gave Rollins, the goody-goody, a cipher and then scared him by showing it to him afterwards. What sport we had in

that room. Squeaking the chairs and taking slides after the floor had been waxed. Then blowing him up with fire-crackers and bombs; till he must have thought himself the Czar indeed."

"It went too far the day a handful of corn was thrown in his face and he insisted on blaming Rollins for it, when it came from the opposite side of the room."

"What a life you must have led that poor man! Cissie exclaims. Jack answers, "On the whole we treated him better than Dr. Arlington. All our musical powers were brought to bear on him. Tops, marbles, percussion caps, music boxes, dogs, cats, rabbits, dead rats and mice, everything you can think of, helped to make his recitations pleasant. Ask Bill about it. He was a ring-leader in all this."

"Don't you believe him. There wasn't a better boy in the class than I was."

"What fiends they all must have been," Cissie gently remarks.

"Have you ever heard of the day, Bill thought dandelions in our buttonholes and our pockets full of marbles wasn't quite excitement enough, so he fainted.

"No!"

"He passed back word to us to be ready. Then got up to ask permission to leave the room and just as it was granted fell back in Ned's arms. He was as white as a sheet and the class in a body carried him out and down stairs. It was all we could do to keep the Doctor from coming down too. One of the fellows, who wasn't in the joke, kept fussing over him all the way down. You should have seen his face, when Bill opened his eyes and said, 'For God's sake, shut up.'"

"I suppose, if I should let him, he would make me out a terror with all these recollections of his.

'Sweet dreamland faces, passing to and fro,
Bring back to memory years of long ago,'"

hums Bill. Just as he does so, the band begins that very same waltz.

"See how well they are trained. I hum the waltz I want and no matter where I am they play it. I am sorry Jack; but Ciss promised me this waltz." Off they go to the dancing room. With Bill an engagement for a dance is merely a means toward a tete-a-tete. So they very soon stop and wander up in the direction of Philo. This is a literary society; but you would scarcely think it from the frivolous uses to which it is put at these balls. Soon they find themselves upon the roof, attracted by the warmth of the spring evening and the moonlight. They come across a bench used for some repairs and then left there, a projection of the roof forming a back to it. It requires but little persuasion on Bill's part to induce her to sit down. They have been talking in a very sentimental way and as they take their seats, he passes his arm about her. They begin to talk of the success of their joke. Cissie says, "How well we worked it together!"

"So well, dearest that we should go on working together. I read an article to-day on how to marry and live on \$25 a week. Won't you try it with me? I love you. If you love me, what's the matter with marrying me?"

"He will hold you, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,

Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.'

What a pair we would be, always quarreling. Not, if I know myself I won't, Sweet William!" And she laughs so contagiously that Bill, though not in the best of humors, has to laugh too. "Now, sir, that I have given you your congé, isn't your arm rather out of place, and had we not better return, as my company can scarcely be very agreeable." They rise and return in silence; for Bill is not particularly pleased at her continued laughter. The first person they meet after leaving the roof is Ned.

"Skylarking, as usual, I see. That was a pretty poor joke of yours, sending us up to Girard College. We owe you one for it. I think I see my way to paying it too. Bill next time you want to put your arm around a girl beware of fresh paint; it gives awkward hints, sometimes." It was true Cissie's back was covered with red paint, except a strip just where his arm had been, while his arm was covered with it too. Ned goes on. "You must have been frivolling very hard. This will make a good story."

"Why shouldn't I frivol with my fiancé. He just proposed and I accepted him." Telling this fib with the utmost coolness. Both men are silent from surprise for a few moments. Then Bill breaks it by saying, "Don't look so glum about it Ned. Though you are jealous that you are not engaged too."

"No, I am not. I was only surprised that all your squabbling should have come to this. Bill you must be in a fearful hurry to celebrate it, for I see you have begun to paint the town red already," pointing to his sleeve.

"Oh, it is not too soon

'A contract of true love to celebrate,
And some donation freely to estate
On the blest lovers.'

Come Ned! The roof you see had given us its donation, while you haven't even congratulated us yet."

"Of course, I wish both of you the greatest happiness, that you cannot doubt. Come down and let the others hear the news. Put this shawl around you, Cissie, so no one else can make the same discovery."

"Thank you. We will tell the rest of our party; but don't let it go any further. I don't want to announce it yet."

"That is wise. You both may change your minds to-morrow, and it would be awkward to announce it one day and break it the next." As they go down the steps, Ned wisely leads the way. Bill whispers to her, "Do you really mean what you said?"

"If you don't want to take it as true, you need not. But I warn you, I am not often as kind. You had better take me in the humor. Besides, I suppose for my reputation it will be better to be engaged for a little while." The others naturally wish them joy, and Jack remarks, "They need not be afraid of having a dull house; their tongues will always be running races, and adding spice to their highly seasoned match."

"Do you mean by that to insinuate that I have undergone many seasons in Philadelphia society, and that our tongues are hung in the middle? If you don't apologize you shall never enter our house."

"And miss all the fun of seeing you fight, never! I most humbly apologize for what I never said."

CHAPTER XII.

The next few weeks fly, with what seems wonderful speed to our friends, busy with their preparations for the approaching match. Many are the parties of various kinds given to the pair. One evening Bill and Ned make up a little boating party, consisting of Edythe, Cissie, Gertie, Victor and themselves. As there are two engaged couples among them and Gertie is so much like a sister to Ned, Mrs. Saxon, who is not feeling well, thinks it unnecessary for them to have a chaperone. They row up the Schuylkill to Ringstetten, a small club house, just above what is known as the Falls, and have supper. On their return Ned and Gertie, who is passionately fond of rowing, gently paddle down. Edythe and Victor, at the others' request, sing to them as they float along. Just before they sing the last one, she asks Cissie, whether she has heard who it was, that they saw drive through the forest fire, "Who it is, that is your 'true and tried man?'"

"No, who is it?"

"I told all the others and thought I had told you. It was Victor."

"Not really. How strange. Now you know the fortune that azalea would have told you." (Does she?)

Edythe appropriately ends their singing with "At the Ferry." As she ceases, she turns to Victor and murmurs, "What a happy omen, Vic; that that was the first song

I ever heard you sing." (Ah! Edythe, you forget the last verse, which you and Victor never sing—

"But 'tis long and long ago, and he is here no more;
I do but sit and dream and dream beside the quiet shore,
The old boat still floats on, as in the years ago,
And thy words are in my heart, my love, forever, ever more.")

"Not only a happy, but a truthful omen too. I loved you then, the first instant that I saw you, as I love you now and my love will last forever, ever more."

Somewhat a similar scene is enacting at the other end of the boat. Cissie is lazily trailing one hand through the cool water. The other lies listlessly in her lap. Bill at her side softly takes the other and whispers, (how often has it been repeated) "I never noticed what a tiny hand you had. I see at last why I came so near losing it altogether."

"Do you, indeed? But it is not so small that I am afraid of losing it, if some one don't hold it. If you will allow me to have it, I can make better use of it than you can, I think." Then lifting her other hand, she lets a few drops fall on his forehead, saying:—

"I will re-christen you, Will-o'-the-wisp."

"Because I was so hard to catch?"

"No, because no one can ever overtake the points of your jokes. They are always just in sight; but never reached."

"Oh. Come now, that is rather far-fetched. Mine is so much better. Why you literally threw yourself at my head and heart. Ask Ned if you didn't." For answer, he receives a handful of water in his face. "Please remember, Cissie, I'm not a Baptist."

Our party has arrived at R——. After a long journey on the cars, they were driven seven or eight miles to Dr. Dixon's country place. On the porch they were met by Dr. Dixon himself, a fine-looking white-haired old gentleman. When Victor introduced Edythe, he looked into her eyes steadfastly for a minute or two, then leaning forward, kissed her on the forehead, saying, "God bless you, my child." Turning to the others, he bade them welcome and proceeded to make them feel at home, as only a Southerner can. For true hospitality, making you feel that his house is as much yours as his, commend me to a Southern gentleman of the old school; for nowhere, in the world can you find his equal as a host. Dr. Dixon's house, a large, rambling, old-fashioned country-seat now rings with laughter, as it has not for many years, for a large party is gathered beneath its roof. The Saxons, Gertie, Cissie, Miss Merton, Miss Collins, Bill Paley and Paul Collins are all of them its guests. While at Victor's place there are, Arthur Scoville, another young Philadelphian, George Laurence by name, and Raymond Van Etten, who is to be best man. Naturally this latter party is continually at the Doctor's. To Ned's discomfort, Van Etten seems very much épris of Gertie, who likes him quite well. Another quarrel has caused a slight coolness between them. So she, a born coquette, encourages Van Etten, to prove her independence of Ned. Jack has not as yet arrived and Ned foolishly allows his displeasure to be seen, which encourages Gertie to continue her flirtation.

One afternoon, within a few days of the wedding, Edythe walked to the end of the place with Victor, who was on his way home. Returning, she sees an old col-

ored woman with difficulty turning the crank to raise a bucket of water from a well near her cabin. Hastening at once to her assistance, she easily draws the water and carries it to her door for her; the old woman protesting all the time that such work should be left for such as her, that "Missy" will spoil her dress and dirty her hands. When Edythe is about to leave, the old woman asks if she is not the one, who is to marry "Massa Victor." When told she is right, she says, "Don't ye do it, honey. He's a bad un; too black like me. Massa Victor have bery black eyes, bery black hair; bery black skin. Dat right for culured purson—not right for white Massa. Don't marry him, Missy. He come to no good end. See it in his eye, bad eye." Edythe listens to no more; but hurries away, her cheeks scarlet with indignation.

Arthur Scorville has furnished them no end of amusement. We have heard how he spoke of Miss Collins formerly. On the way out, he had been thrown in contact with her to some extent and had found her quite attractive. As a result he was continually boring her by his attentions. For having heard his remarks about her, she was not the girl to bend her knees at the first sign of favor from such exalted rank. Any less conceited man would have seen at once how disagreeable to her was his presence; but Scorville could not.

As the day drew near and no Jack appeared, much surprise was expressed. He had been forced to leave the city on important business; but was expected to join them before the wedding. The truth of the matter was, that this business was sufficiently important to enable him to stay away and yet have no disagreeable remarks

made about it, and he intended to stay away. But about two days before the time fixed, his old distrust of Victor came back so strongly, that he decided to go on to see that all was right. He was riding on the rear platform of the last car, enjoying the scenery as they passed through some of the mountains of Virginia. When suddenly he felt a violent shock and was thrown into the air, fortunately falling upon a pile of loose earth, which formed a sort of a cushion and prevented any more serious hurts than a few trifling bruises. Picking himself up, he hurried toward the train, whence could be heard heart-rending cries for help. His train had collided with a freight train and the forward cars were completely wrecked. The last two however had escaped serious injury and their occupants were unhurt save for the shock. Jack knew, that, by walking on to the junction, only a few miles distant, he could catch a train and reach R—— just in time. But no one seemed to know what to do, and as there was danger of the wreck catching fire at any moment, he felt his duty lay here, where the danger was immediate, rather than at R——, where it was vague and uncertain. So he at once assumed command of those, who were able and willing to work, sending one portion to fight the flames that were breaking out in the freight train, while with the others, he went to the rescue of those in the wreck. A wrecking train arrived in a couple of hours, together with several surgeons and a corps of volunteer nurses. Jack readily gave up the task he had performed so well, to hurry on in order to reach R——, if possible, in time for the marriage. When he reached the junction, the train had gone and he found it was impossible.

CHAPTER XIII.

A wayward sunbeam, falling on Edythe's fair face, calls upon her to arise; for it is her wedding day. Outside the birds are singing merrily. Everything is fresh and green, after the heavy dew, that sparkles on every leaf in myriads of tiny gems. The young corn plants are just peeping out at the world and the wheat begins to show that golden yellow, which betokens an approaching harvest. Overhead the heavens display a color that rivals the finest of Italy's glorious blues. A perfect morning for a marriage is the thought of all our friends. The old darky woman shakes her head, however, as she stands at her cabin door. Way down in the west, just above the trees, she can see a little black cloud, shaped like a finger and not much bigger, pointing towards the church. Larger and darker it grows, as it hurries on. Larger and darker, and the old woman still shakes her head muttering to herself as she hobbles to the church to see the ceremony.

"No little scribbler is of wit so bare,
But has his fling at the poor wedded pair,"

says Addison. So we will hurry over what has been so often written. The whole neighborhood is there, curious to see the Eastern people, who have come all this distance for a wedding. At last to the notes of Mendelssohn's exquisite march, Edythe comes to the altar on her brother's arm. The rumbling of thunder, with an occa-

sional flash of lightning is heard during the lovely service. At the moment when Victor should have made his answer, a bright flash, accompanied by a sharp, quick report that renders it inaudible even to Edythe and the Minister, startles the congregation, but that is all. The ceremony proceeds and Edythe and Victor come down the aisle together, as bonny a couple as one could wish to see. So thinks many a one that day. As they return, Gertie, Edythe's first bridesmaid, naturally is with Van Etten, who remarks to her "How like a pistol shot that thunder was!" A straight young tree, almost at the church door, is on the ground charred and disfigured by the flash. "Are you superstitious, Mr. Van Etten?"

"No, I leave that for old women and children."

"In which category do you place me, for I am?"

"I love beautiful children, so it must be in that."

"I see, you can crawl out of a very small hole quite gracefully. But you must not think that I really am superstitious. I only said that to see what you would say."

"I imagined it was said for effect, as I thought you had too much sense." They have arrived at the house, where every one is shaking hands with the happy pair. After which tiresome ordeal, they start for a trip through Canada amid showers of rice. The thunder-storm is a topic of general conversation. The self-possession of the bride under the circumstances is particularly spoken of. No damage has been done except to the tree; while so little rain had fallen that it was over before the wedding was ended.

The party breaks up with a hearty farewell to their kind-hearted host. As they go East together, Van Et-

ten is with Gertie, a good part of the time. At last becoming rather tired of him, she calls upon Ned, who is reading not far off, to stand by something she has said about Miss Merton. Ned readily does so. Van Etten asks if they don't think she is cunning in some of her ways. Ned replies, "In one sense yes. They might be cunning were she ten years younger. I don't like veal manners on beef."

"Oh, come now. You are rather severe."

"No, he isn't. Not one bit too much so. There she is calling to you. You had better see what your charmer wishes." As he reluctantly leaves, she says to Ned, "Do you know, I think Miss Merton is in love with Victor. I know she hates Edythe for having married him. I watched her throughout the wedding. She was delighted when that thunder clap came and when she saw the tree outside the door. She is superstitious and thinks them bad omens. But you don't think so, Ned?"

"Of course not, you little puss." After a pause, "What are you thinking of?"

"I was thinking of Jack. I wonder where he can be."

"I forgot to tell you I received a telegram from him. There was an accident, a collision, and he was delayed. No. He wasn't hurt."

"If he wasn't hurt then, he was yesterday."

"What do you mean?"

"Why Ned, are you blind? Don't you know that he was in love with Edythe and is so still?"

"No. I thought he had gotten over his slight fancy for her long ago. Are you sure?"

"Yes. Positive."

"Poor Jack. I wish I had known this."

"You couldn't have done anything and it might have distressed you, so he didn't tell you."

"I am very, very sorry. Of course I would rather she had married Jack, than any other man in the world. How is it, he came to confide in you and say nothing to me?"

"He didn't confide in me at first. I saw it, as any one could, who didn't have a brother's blindness. Besides he probably thought it better to confide in a girl, as more likely to understand. You know Jack has quite a high opinion of me; a good deal better one than most people. Wouldn't you confide your heart troubles to me, Ned?" smiling archly.

"Certainly, as you are the cause of them."

"Suppose I should say you were the cause of mine?"

"You have no idea how happy it would make me; but ——"

"But you're not. Isn't that it? Ned you don't think me too small do you?"

"Of course not. Why do you ask?"

"Ada Merton said, she didn't know how men could like such small girls, that looked as if they would blow away any minute."

"It would be a beneficent wind that would blow Miss Merton away with all her fine speeches. I can't understand what induced Edythe to ask her to go on with us."

"I wonder where Edythe is now."

"They must be nearly at Detroit by this time."

"I suppose I shall meet them at Bar Harbor. Couldn't you get off and come up there too?"

"No. We shall be too busy then for me to leave."

"I'm so sorry. Changing the subject in something of a hurry, did I tell you of Jack Dolman's latest?"

"No. What is it?"

"The other day he was walking up the street at his usual rapid gait. In front of him were Miss Knox and a friend. They supposing he intended to join them and not wishing it, walked on very fast. Really almost ran. Coming to a friend's house, they waited on the steps till he had passed and then went slowly home. That evening Miss Knox received a formal note from him, saying that if she would look at the first verse, twenty-eighth chapter of Proverbs, she would find some good advice. Of course curiosity compelled her to look and she found, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth.'" Ada Merton approaches and asks at what they are laughing. Gertie answers "at Dolman's last performance."

"Something unusually bright, I suppose. By the way, Miss Tremont, he is your latest conquest, is he not? If I were you, I should aim for higher game, not take what no one else will have."

"At least I am always successful when I attempt to make a conquest. I don't allow another girl to carry off what I have regarded as my own especial property."

"You are lucky then. But isn't it queer that Mr. Harden should not appear?"

"Extremely," answers Ned.

"I should think that under the circumstances he would be particularly anxious to be present."

"So should I," acquiesces he.

"If he had no consideration for himself, he might

have some thought for Edythe. Think how it will be talked about. It was outrageous, it was shameful," she goes on, working herself into a show of righteous indignation, as Ned does not contradict her; "to allow a thing like that to keep him away, when he could save her from such gossip by coming."

"Are you sure you know what kept him away, Miss Merton?"

"Of course he did not want to see her marry a rival."

"Then probably it will be highly satisfactory to you to know that he was coming, and that only a serious railway accident, in which he had a narrow escape, prevented his arrival. You can read the account of it in the newspapers."

"Ah, indeed. I am glad to hear he suffered no injury; then that was a lucky accident for him," and she retired feeling somewhat uncomfortable, but smiling in spite of her defeat.

"The old cat!" Gertie exclaimed, as she left them, "how I would like to choke her! Making such a fuss about nothing. I don't see what they could say about his absence, that would affect Edythe. Talking like that about Jack and to you of all men. How beautifully you kept your temper and took that rise out of her." Beautifully kept indeed; but it was there. His black eyes were flashing, and the veins of his forehead swollen. It was well for Miss Merton she was a woman; for had a man spoken to him thus, the consequences might have been serious. However, the black clouds of his wrath soon dispersed before the sunshine of Gertie's gayety. Miss Merton is vowing vengeance, and woe betide Ned, if it is ever in her power to work him harm.

CHAPTER XIV.

We shall now ask our reader to make a little trip with us. Taking one of the Pennsylvania Railroad local trains, we alight at Ardmore, one of the prettiest of the many attractive stations on the main line. A half-mile walk over a rickety board-walk, or a drive in an equally rickety wagon, brings us to the cricket grounds. Arriving at the gate, we perceive a sight, which must be pleasing to him or her, whether a lover of the game or not. To our left is an attractive looking club-house, to our right a grand stand, whose old and battered appearance should be a delight to the lover of antiquities. By its side is the Ladies' Club House, a dainty little wooden building, between which stretches an expanse of green, velvety turf, kept in perfect order. At the near end is a plateau, upon which are pitched the cricket creases. A gentle slope leads down from this to another, which is used for tennis. We have but to look from this lovely field to the dark woods, that form the background on three sides, to acknowledge the truth of that judgment, which pronounces the Merion cricket-grounds the most beautiful of all those in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, the American home of cricket.

As for the membership of the Club, well, ask any cricketer who has played at the various grounds of this city, which Club (excepting his own of course) has uniformly treated him with the greatest civility, and the

chances are he will answer the Merion. Proverbial for ill-luck, at no other grounds is the visitor more sure of gentlemanly treatment and a good crease. But enough of this subject, which, however interesting to the author, cannot fail to be more so to the members of the club than to the majority of our readers.

The match to-day is with the first eleven of the Germantown Cricket Club, hardly less popular than the Merion. It is one of the series for the Halifax Cup, representing the championship of Philadelphia and thus of America. Ned Saxon is to play for the Merion, and a party composed of Gertie, Cissie, Bill Paley, and Jack Harden, have driven down in the middle of the day to see it. They find Lizzie Collins and Arthur Scoville by whom they take seats. The first innings is just ending as they arrive. It has been unfortunate for the home players; they having scored but 79 runs to their opponents' 142. Ned has been particularly unsuccessful, retiring for nothing in his batting attempt, and proving almost as unlucky in his bowling.

As he comes up to our friends at the end of the innings, Gertie scolds him: "What do you mean by getting out for a duck? If you don't make double figures next inning, I won't speak to you again. Remember that when you go to the bat. You have been spoilt. You think you can always score, and become impatient. Please play steadily next time. I hate to see you get out for a small score." Ned promises to do his best, and in return, she allows him to share their lunch.

Meantime Bill is talking to Lizzie Collins. "What do you think of cricket, Miss Collins?"

"It is an interesting game, but they lose so much time changing from one end to another all the time. It is very tiresome. I don't see why they do it."

"Don't you know? It is all on your account. They thought your eyes would become weary looking at the same spot all the time, so they thought to vary it by changing it that way. If you do not like it I will ask them to stop it. I am sure they will do it for you."

"I don't know whether to believe you or not."

"Believe me, of course. 'Believe me for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor, that you may believe.' I always tell the truth."

"What is that?" asks Cissie, who has overheard this last remark.

"I was just telling Miss Collins that they had the overs on her account. Don't they, Ciss?"

"It's nothing of the kind, Lizzie. They have them because the grass at one end would become excessively tired, if the ball hit it all day; so they give it a rest by changing ends."

"If you won't believe me, don't believe her either; but think it a mystery of the game, that you have not mastered yet."

"I do believe that. What do you think of the Merion's chances of winning?"

Bill answers with a smile, "They are cock-sure to win."

"How is that? I thought the others were so far ahead."

"Oh, no. The object of the game, as we play it here, is to see which side can make the fewest runs."

"You must think me very green to believe such a

story as that. As you can't tell the truth, it seems, I won't talk to you any longer. There is Mr. Harden. I shall ask him. Mr. Harden, what do you think of the Merion's chances?" As Jack sits down in front of her. "Things look badly now; but a cricket match is 'never lost till it's won,' so we may pull through. There they go at last. We can soon tell now."

The opening of the second inning is no more favorable than the first. Three wickets go down for thirteen runs. It is Ned's turn to go in. As he rises to go out, Gertie says, "There, I have put a buttercup in your cap for luck. Don't be impatient, and do play steadily for my sake, Ned." He promises again to do so, and he keeps his promise. A successful stand is made, and he remains at the bat till the telegraph shows the century, when he is caught out on a difficult catch. The total is 109 for six wickets. Of this he has obtained 56 by superb cricket. They all of course congratulate him. Gertie is wild with excitement and delight. She has scarcely been able to keep still while he was batting. At one or two of his big hits she fairly screamed for joy, and once when he was nearly run out she closed her eyes so as not to see it.

"Well, Dolly, I wish you could be on the grounds whenever I play, I might make more big scores, if you were there to keep me straight."

"That big hit of yours to the lower fence should have counted more than six. It was worth more."

"It was a boundary hit."

"I don't like boundaries when you are batting. I am sure that you could make more without them."

"Gertie would like to see him make a hit for thirty-

seven, like that one in Australia somebody told me about," Cissie remarks.

"That's a good story," says Bill. "I suppose your informant got it from the *Cricketer*. By the way that story reminds me of a good one I heard the other day. Quite appropriate, too, as this is a game of ball. In the recent war with the South, a young fellow enlisted from Maine who had been the catcher for a local base-ball nine. One day his regiment was undergoing the ordeal of the fire from a battery. He had been assigned for orderly duty, and was just reporting to the Colonel, when seeing a small-sized shell coming directly towards them, he sprang forward, and catching it, threw it a considerable distance in front of him, shouting, at the same time, 'Look out there on second.' Then turning round to the officer, he said, 'Beg pardon, sir, I couldn't let a man steal a base on me that way.'"

"That's a capital one, Bill," from Cissie. "It is another of your own invention, I am sure. No one else could think of so outlandish a one."

The innings ended as he finished, and the home team were retired for 147, to which Ned's score was decidedly the largest contribution. This left the visitors 84 to tie or 85 to win. Naturally they anticipated an easy victory. However, they were not so successful in the opening of their second innings as they had been in their first; Braithwaite, the Merion professional, as usual, proving too much for them. Wicket after wicket went down till five men were out for 22. Then a stand was made. Thirty, forty, fifty went up without the loss of a

man. A number of bowlers were tried without effect. At last Ned, who had bowled with but slight success in the beginning, was put on again. The change was a good one, for the stand was broken in his first over, 6 for 59, or 26 to win. The new comer, however, had plenty of grit, for he hit the last ball of this over for three, and then hit Braithwaite for a pair of doubles; but in Ned's next trial he lost his companion, 7 for 66, or 19 to win. The bowling was splendid, and the fielding very sharp, so runs came slowly, till the professional bowled another, 8 for 73 or 12 to win. The excitement now was intense, and grew still more so, as a single off Braithwaite and a four off Ned increased the score, only 7 to win. A cut for three brings the score to 81. Then Ned pitches the first ball of his over up to him. A big hit, surely a four, is made, and the game is lost. It is not quite big enough. The ball seems to hang in the air. Slowly it begins to fall, then swifter and swifter it moves, till it lands in the hands of one of the youngsters of the eleven, placed just within the ropes. He has fumbled it and all is lost. No! He recovers it before it reaches the ground, and the ninth man is out. The last one is in, a boy of sixteen. Eighty though is up and only four left to make. He is opposed to Ned's bowling, and this over will probably decide it. The spectators hold their breath as Ned begins. The first ball is blocked; but what is that crack? The batsman has driven the ball hard and straight, a certain four. But no. Ned has made a splendid stop; the game is not lost yet. Again the ball is blocked and again. Ned starts for his last attempt of this over. No one speaks—all eyes are fixed

on the batter. There comes the ball. What will he do with it? It curves slightly while in the air, and pitches on his leg stump. He plays it back instead of forward. Put her up! The ball has broken right across the crease, his off stump is down, the game is won. As he joins the others, Ned asks Gertie, "Will you speak to me now, Dolly?"

"Oh, Ned, you're a perfect love. What would they have done without you?"

They easily make room for Ned in the cart, and they all drive to the Saxon's to tea. Mrs. Saxon has taken a small place at Bryn Mawr, not far from the hotel, at which the Tremonts, Bill and Jack, are staying. When they reach the house they find Ada Merton there. She had come in the afternoon to pay Mrs. Saxon a visit, and had accepted her invitation to stay on in the evening. After supper they go to the drawing-room, where Gertie sits down at the piano to play for them. Cissie asks her to sing "Good-bye Summer," a song of Tosti's that has just come out. "I don't know all the words, but I'll sing what I know, and hum the rest."

She does so. Once when she is humming, she is suddenly interrupted by the report of a kiss, so loud that every one turns to where Cissie and Bill are sitting on the porch, just without the window. He, thinking some explanation necessary, says, "Don't look such daggers at me, Mrs. Saxon" (who is laughing heartily at Cissie's blushing face), "she asked me, 'What are we waiting for, oh my love?' and then said, 'Kiss me right straight on the brow.' What else could I do? As Adam said, she tempted me, and I could not resist."

"You silly boy! I was only saying the words of that song."

"How could I know that? Besides, they were rather suggestive. You see we were merely doing a little love making. Go on with your song, Gertie. I won't offend again." The evening passes right merrily as Bill furnishes them plenty to laugh at.

When the party breaks up, Bill naturally sees his *financé* home, Jack and Gertie go to the hotel together, while to Ned falls the, to him, unpleasant duty of escorting Ada Merton. After a rambling conversation, she asks him, "Don't you think Gertie is becoming quite fond of Mr. Van Etten?"

"I haven't noticed it."

"He certainly is of her. You know he has been over several times to see her. I saw them together yesterday at the hotel."

"But that don't show that she is fond of him."

"No, but I saw her give him a ring. She put it on for him, and as she did so, looked up at him with an expression that certainly was excessively fond."


"It was probably one of his she was putting on with a wish," he rejoins, trying to conceal the irritation he feels at her talking in this way about Gertie.

"No, for I saw it afterward on his finger, and it was that little gold serpent ring she always wears. You remember it, don't you?"

"Yes, I remember it." (He had given it to her himself, as perhaps the reader remembers.) "But are you sure it is the same one?"

"I am certain. If you would like to see for yourself,

come to our place to-morrow. He will be there. Come and take dinner with us. Your mother will spare you to me for once, and then you will have the best chance to find out whether I am right or not."



CHAPTER XV.

Ned goes to the Merton's place to dinner in an uncomfortable frame of mind. Miss Merton's remarks about Gertie had disturbed him more than he was willing to admit. He thought he was sure she was mistaken about the ring, for he had too much confidence in Gertie's sense of honor, to think that she would give away anything he had given her to any one, much less to a stranger. But he could not keep out of his mind, try as hard as he could, a faint suspicion that there might be some foundation for her words. Their many recent quarrels, her going to the Mænnerchor, after he had said it wasn't a fit place for her, her rather prononcé flirtation with Van Etten in Kentucky had all united to weaken his faith in her and would keep coming to his mind as evidence, that she might have given this ring away. Soon after his arrival, he had an opportunity to observe Van Etten's hands closely. What was his cha-

grin to find there, on his little finger, the ring he had given Gertie. He knew it well; for it had certain peculiarities, which distinguished it from other rings of the same kind. Daunted for the moment, the feeling came over him that she must have given it away. He resolved, however, to see whether she still wore his ring, for he could not forego the hope that this might be another in likeness of hers. His condition of mind was not much improved, when Miss Merton asked Van Etten, "Did I not hear you say something about of going to Bar Harbor with the Tremonts?"

"Yes. Miss Tremont was kind enough to give me permission to join their party, when she heard I was going about the same time as they. Are you going to stay at Rodick's in spite of the bad fare?"

"Oh yes. You know I could not give up the fish-pond. Besides all those hotels are about the same. The eating is about as bad at one as the other. Who was that fashion plate I saw you talking to in the hall at the Hotel night before last? The little rosy-cheeked fellow."

"That was Rosy Collingshurst, otherwise known as Mr. Roswell Ames Endicott Whittier Longfellow Collingshurst, of Boston."

"How many trunks did he bring with him to carry all that?"

"He generally travels with fourteen. I suppose he brought them all with him. He needs that many for his clothes alone."

"I suppose he thinks he must clothe each one of his names. What kind of a man is he?"

“He is very well off for a bachelor and makes dress his occupation. He has nothing else to do, so it keeps him out of mischief. In character he is a specimen that you meet in all our large cities. Little head and big heart, particularly where ladies are concerned. He goes about fancying himself in love with nearly every girl he meets and saying the most absurdly flattering things to them.”

“I suppose he has come here on some such errand. Otherwise why should he come so far?”

“I suppose he did come on some such wild goose chase. Pardon me—you understand he is the goose not one of your sex. Speaking of him, recalls a story they tell of him. How true it is, I can’t say. When he was a boy of sixteen or thereabouts, of course not as wealthy, but quite as soft toward girls, he was or pretended to be very enthusiastic over Evangeline. One day three girls, to whom he had recently been attentive (gone on, I think their phrase would be), discovered that he had given each one of them a copy of *Evangeline* bound exactly alike and of the same edition. They became inquisitive and bustled about till they found that altogether thirteen other girls of their acquaintance had been the recipients of precisely similar gifts. Every one had ‘from the heart of your devoted slave Roswell Collingshurst’ on the fly leaf and beneath it

‘May the woes of Evangeline
Your heart to your Rosy soften.’

A couplet of which he was inordinately proud. For, as you might imagine he had written himself. Going to the

house of one of these girls one evening, he found the sixteen girls awaiting him. The hostess stepped forward and said, 'Mr. Collingshurst, the woes of Evangeline have so softened our hearts that we can no longer keep from you a book of which you were so fond as to buy by the dozen.' The sixteen advanced toward him, each holding out her Evangeline. Rosy without a word turned and fled into the snow-covered streets without overshoes, hat or overcoat."

As we have remarked before, Cissie was not a beauty; but besides her bright expression and a face that was certainly pretty, she had an unconscious trick that added much to her appearance, often making her look lovely. Without knowing it she would place herself in the most picturesque attitudes. Dressing as she did in a quaint old-fashioned style, she often looked as if she had just stepped out of some antique painting. A stray thought of this kind passes through Bill's mind, when he finds her this afternoon. He enters the place passing through a gate, whose posts match the lodge of rough gray stones apparently heaped together without order and entirely free from mortar, and covered with vines which find a ready support among the projections of the stones. Scarlet geraniums, petunias and roses light up the dark walls with bits of color springing up in the most unexpected places. Nor is the place one whit less attractive than its entrance. Starting amidst a maze of flowers the carriage road winds through a bit of woods filled with tall, massive trees, many of whom have reared their stately heads for a hundred years and more. Just before we pass out

of this wood a little stream, whose dark, fern-covered banks suggest a coolness, delightful on such a warm summer day, goes babbling by beneath a stone arch, to widen into an enchanting lake. Down to whose edges the grass grows close and thick. The house—but no, our readers can imagine it with far more satisfaction than we could describe it to them, so we will leave it to them, only premising that it is in thorough keeping with its approach. Bill, after giving his horse to the footman, passes on to her favorite spot, where he knows he will find her, to a hammock swaying between two trees, a chestnut and an oak, whose thick foliage casts its protecting shade over her. Clad in some light summer fabric, Cissie lies in the hammock, fast asleep. Her hair has become unfastened and falls in heavy waving locks upon her bosom; one arm is pillowed behind her head, the other is half hidden by the mass of flowers scattered over her, through which her hand can just be seen. Her expression is serious and so unlike her usual laughing looks that Bill stops for a moment in surprise. Then a queer thought strikes him. She might have looked thus were she under some one of the fairy spells we hear so much about in our childhood. The Sleeping Beauty occurs to him. An irresistible and not unnatural impulse urges him to see whether he cannot break the spell as the prince had done. He bends over her and his lips meet hers. She starts up and, realizing the situation, is indignant, perhaps more. Alas for Bill's dreams! He has broken the spell and with a vengeance.

“How dare you steal upon me that way and take such an advantage of me!”

"I didn't steal upon you. I regularly tramped."

"You didn't. You sneaked upon me and I hate a man that sneaks," answers Cissie, the condition of whose hair does not improve her temper.

"Oh, come, Ciss 'an honest kiss ne'er goes amiss,' you know."

"But yours was not an honest one. You stole it most dishonestly." Cissie can't remain angry for two minutes, when there is anything comic to be enjoyed; and the difference between Bill's expression when she first awoke and now, is sufficiently comic to have tickled the palate of the most thoroughly satiated epicurean in the realm of wit. For reasons of her own, however, she pretends to continue enraged. Bill answers that he don't think it such a very heinous crime to kiss one's fiancé.

"I am no longer your fiancé. I think appearances are saved now, and I have accepted another man," holding up her hand where his ring had been replaced by another's.

"I will return you yours to-morrow."

True to his colors to the end, Bill says with a smile that lacks its usual brightness

"'But 'tis just these women's ways—
All the same the wide world over—
Fooled by what's most worthless, they
Cheat in turn the honest lover.'"

Cissie thinks with a smile that can scarcely be suppressed, "He is nearer the mark than he imagines." But aloud she excuses herself on the ground of her appearance; so Bill takes his leave with a heavy heart.

As Ned bids Miss Merton good-bye, she says to him in a low voice in which the triumph and sarcasm can scarcely be concealed, "Don't let this affair lower your opinion of your own attractiveness. Gertie is probably enchanted by Van Etten's money."

Naturally this attempt at consolation fails of its apparent end; but is highly successful in the direction in which it was really meant. It shot one more rankling dart into his already poisoned mind. His condition as he walks away towards his home is unenviable. Try as much as he can, he cannot banish his suspicions. Little words, little acts, forgotten till now, rise up to strengthen them, and as he nears the entrance to their place, conviction forces itself upon him. As a last hope, he determines to visit Gertie at once to see whether she still wears his ring or not. Passing on he soon reaches the hotel, and finding her, asks her to take a walk with him. As he does so, he notices that his ring is gone. His doubt has become certainty. Gertie remarks a quick flash in his eye, that to her accustomed mind betokens anger. A slight hesitation to accept only increases his passion. She at last consents. Passing along the porch and down the side steps, he is strangely silent. She to make up for it and to keep up appearances talks on, resolved to ask him the reason when they are alone. As they pass out from general observation, she tells him that Cissie has broken her engagement, saying she expected it.

"She is like all you women, fickle and heartless." Gertie starts at his angry tone.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Don't attempt to play the innocent," in a contemptuous tone. "It is too late for that now. I know you have given my ring to Van Etten. Probably joking at the same time about the poor fool you have deluded. You need attempt no explanation. He is richer than I. Tie him to your triumphal chariot, drag him over the course. I am tired of being the sport of such a heartless, mercenary coquette."

Gertie had tried to defend herself, as yet only pained by his fury; but when he had refused to hear her, her blood fired at his words, and turning to him a face as enraged as his own, she says, "How dare you speak to me thus? How brave, how honorable, to insult a weak woman, who cannot resent it. Whatever you say of Mr. Van Etten, he is too much of a man to speak to a woman in such a way." They had turned, and as she said this, she went back to the hotel and soon reached her room almost unperceived. Ned, too, hurries away; whither it matters not. A brisk walk of half a mile, however, brings him to his senses. Returning, he meets Bill, who has been out for an airing, himself. Ned remembering what Gertie had said, after shaking hands with him says, "So we are in the same boat. We have both come to know woman's falsehood and fickleness."

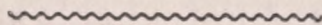
"What? Has Gertie thrown you over?"

Ned answers, "Yes."

"Whew," and Bill gives a long whistle. "You look fearfully down in the mouth about it too. Come cheer up old man! Never say die. What is that Scotch proverb about nineteen nay-says equalling a yea? That's about my principle. Cissie has refused me three or four

times in fun, and twice in earnest, so some day I hope to receive the requisite number. Perseverance will win almost any woman in the long run, provided she don't absolutely hate you, and may do so even then. I'll back you to win against any New Yorker."

Bill rattled on, doing his best to encourage his friend; but the latter, not having his sunny disposition, was unable to look at his misfortune in the same light.



CHAPTER XVI.

Bar Harbor! Land of fogs, flirtations and bad fare! to you we must now "wend our weary way." Yet stay—since the last Presidential campaign, alliteration is odious to nearly half our nation and to probably a much larger portion of the Quaker City's population. We will then respect their prejudices and spare their feelings. "Farewell, a fond farewell," to all the choice adjectives and phrases we had found or coined to describe the prince of summer resorts, or should it be princess?

It is curious the amount of liberty allowed here to even the most strictly guarded at home. This is perhaps because of gossip there is almost none. The old lady gossips do not frequent it, and though it would be a superb field for the exercise of their peculiar talents, let us hope they never will. The young ladies and the men are too busy enjoying themselves and have too many pecadillos of their own to bother themselves about others. So mirth and joy reign untrammelled. The majority of our characters are now treading the boards at Rodick's, the joyous centre of this realm of wit and gayety. Scene first is in the fish-pond. To frequenters of Bar Harbor no explanation of this is necessary. To the uninitiated it may be well to say, that this is the name given to the hall; because, as it is generally explained, this is where the women come to fish for the men. An explanation calculated to increase the latter's conceit and not as true as if

reversed. However, this place is probably responsible for more *affaires du cœur* than any other of equal size within our knowledge; or to be *en rapport* with its name, more human fish have been hooked within its narrow limits than within any other pond dedicated to the same purpose. Mr. Rosy Collingshurst draws near its dangerous limit, a fish ever ready to be hooked. He is carefully gotten up in a blue cloth hussar jacket, trimmed with black silk braid, patent leather Oxford ties, fawn-colored gaiters, with plaid trowsers, all in the height of fashion. Alas for Rosy the decree has gone forth, they must be worn skin-tight. His little legs are encased in a pair so glove-like that he is scarcely able to bend his knees. This makes descending the stairs hardly an enviable labor. The last flight is gained in safety. The end is at hand, when one of his feet slips, he cannot help himself, and down the steps he slides, gaining rapidity at every moment. The consequences will be serious, for the lower steps are crowded. Van Etten stops him in the middle of his career with "Way enough, Rosy. We'll make it a half-way trip this time."

Gertie looks around at him and says, when her laughter permits, "Mr. Collingshurst, you must have reached your second childhood to enjoy such an amusement as sliding down stairs."

"Perhaps he has not left his first. How about that, Rosy?"

His youth is a sore point with Mr. Collingshurst. Miss Merton, however, calls him to her side with "Won't you speak to me, Mr. Collingshurst? I have heard so much that is interesting about you." Drawing back her

skirts, she makes room for him at her side in such a manner as to effectually screen him from the gaze of the rest of the finny inhabitants of the pond. Her kind, almost grave manner, when every one else is laughing at his mishap, makes him her slave on the spot. A few minutes later Cissie and Bill join the party. Their appearance calls forth such an expression of consternation—almost terror upon Collingshurst's face, that Bill in a hurried whisper asks Cissie "Am I really so ugly? See how I frighten Collingshurst." The tone of voice, which he intended to be amusing, had such a touch of sadness about it as to destroy whatever fun there might have been in his remark. Cissie pays no attention to him, exclaiming, "Do let's make up a buck-board party to drive to Somesville to-morrow? I must have a good supper soon or I shall die." (Tragically.) "You will chaperone us, won't you, Edie?"

"I shall be only too glad," she answers. A quiet mood had come over her, to Victor's disgust, who wished his wife to do him honor by shining in conversation. This evening Miss Merton had monopolized it. All readily agreed to Cissie's proposal and resolved themselves into a Committee on Ways and Means. Gertie, turning to Van Etten, says, "I have never enjoyed a supper more than those they have at Somesville. Have you?"

"Yes, once, at Greenville, Tennessee."

"You must have had a tremendous appetite to think it better than those at Somesville."

"I shall probably have a better one to-morrow."

"I am sure there must have been some particular

reason for your enjoyment of this supper. What was it?" And Gertie frowns as if in deep thought.

"Perhaps it was the beauty of the waitress," puts in Victor.

"Maybe she was a lady disguised like that girl in the Dutchess' story. 'Her first appearance.' Southern girls are very handsome. Was she, Mr. Van Etten?" asks Ada Merton.

"Very. Only perhaps a little too dark for my taste." As Miss Merton is a dark brunette, this is thought a *bêtise*, and Gertie whispers, "Beware!" He smiles, but says nothing.

"Was your beauty really a lady?" from Gertie.

"She might have been a princess in her own country."

"She was a foreigner then. Where did she come from?"

"I am not sure, Miss Merton. I think from Africa. She was the blackest negress I ever saw." Here the disgusted expressions of the girls who were expecting a romance proved too much for him and he roared with laughter. Cissie, from a twinkle in his eye and knowing a little of the place, had expected something of the kind, so she had turned her attention towards Bill. That young gentleman was sitting in a most disconsolate attitude, staring at a tack, which fastened down the carpet.

"Bill, I don't think you could drive that tack in any further, if you stared at it till doomsday. Let it alone. Why, you are in a regular 'brown study.'"

"That's it," looking up at her with a smile, as though she had resolved the doubt for him. "You've found

what has been puzzling me for the last half hour. There floated through my mind just a shadowy image of it. I tried in vain to grasp it." He paused, as though lost in thought.

"What is this great question I've found for you?"

"Why it should be called a brown study? Green it might be, if the fellow was green, or blue if he felt blue, as I always do; but why brown? Why not black, white or yellow?" He looks around as though seeking an answer. As no one volunteers to solve this knotty problem for him, he returns to the tack, as if to drag from it the solution. But do you think he was thinking of that? All through this little conversation, so characteristic of him, his manner had a tinge of melancholy; even his smile was sad.

"Love is a passion, whose effects are various;
It ever brings some change upon the soul,
Some virtue or some vice, till then unknown."

Later on, Cissie and he are wandering on a path that passes along the shore. She has hitherto had the conversation to herself. At last she turns suddenly to him, when he has failed for the third time to answer a question. "What has happened to you? Has the cat run away with your tongue? You seem oppressed with sadness. Can I help you to remove it?"

"You know you can, Ciss."

"How?"

"Can you ask how? When you know it is my love for you that causes my misery.

"Why don't you cast it from you then?"

“Ah, that I could! But no, in my very wretchedness I find my joy. My feelings are those of that new song: ‘I think of all thou art to me. I dream of what thou canst not be. My life is cursed with thoughts of thee forever and forever.’” He sings it through. When his voice is still, Cissie is silent, overcome with the beauty of that song, heard for the first time on such a night, and by some novel emotion in her breast. But she struggled against it while he was speaking, and as he ceased, she conquered it and became her wayward self again. He has gone on to say: “For a long, long time, almost, I think, since I have known you, I have loved you. Then my love was like that moon in daylight, but a faint dash of cloud before the brilliant light of the sun. As the moon too grows brighter and brighter at sunset, so my love grew stronger and stronger, till it bears as great a sway o’er my bosom as the queen of the night does o’er her kingdom.”

Mischievously she asks him, “You have compared your love for me to the moon; what was the sun, that so eclipsed it? Your self-love?” Bill wisely declining to answer this question, she goes on: “You have spoken of love. It is said hope should go hand in hand with it, you know.”

“I once thought it did; but now——” A sigh finishes the sentence.

“But now you think it like yonder meteor, or one of those dim stars, that blazing in an unnatural brightness for a few weeks falls back into deeper obscurity, or disappears altogether.”

“What is this?” she exclaims, as the air becomes

thick and murky, and a white cloud appears rapidly approaching them. No need to answer. They know too well; a fog is at hand. A moment of silence as they retrace their steps. Then as it closes in on them, shutting out all objects from their view, save those within a few feet of them, she resumes her teasing. "There, the fog has destroyed your emblem of love and hope. If it has destroyed the love itself, you should be thankful to it."

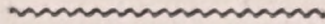
"I shall give it thanks for another reason. It has separated us from the rest of the world. Would that it would always do so! I never feel as much alone anywhere else as in a fog. Don't you feel so too?"

"No. It never gives me any feeling but a desire to get out of it."

Repulsed and made fun of, Bill looks so mournful that she relents. Asking him for his arm, she draws close up to him, and with a charming smile says, "Bill, I have discovered something." Slightly encouraged by her manner, he asks, "What is it?"

"If your eyebrows were a quarter of an inch longer you could actually scowl. No! That isn't what I have found." The hotel is almost reached. "I have found you the easiest person to tease I ever came across and—yes, I am coming, mother"—just as she leaves him, "the dearest old goose about it too." As she goes off with her mother, she gently calls good-bye, and kisses her hand to him. Her reflections are something like this: "I never saw him like this before. How much in earnest!" and admitting it with reluctance even to herself, "how much more attractive! I never heard him sing

before, as he sung that song. What can have changed him? I must make him give me the words. She dropped off to sleep. Bill as he went to his room in "whisky row" thought to himself, "She is right. I am easily teased. What can have happened to me? I never used to be. It is too bad; but she can do what she pleases with me."



CHAPTER XVII.

When Victor joins the rest at the breakfast table, he brings them word that Edythe is feeling too unwell to leave her room. The girls, finishing their little relished breakfast, hurry up to her room. Victor some time after turning from the office counter where he has been lighting a cigarette, meets Ada Merton coming down the stairs. "Edythe says she won't be able to come down for several days. I am so sorry. It is so hard on you; for it must take so much from your pleasure."

"I shall have to take refuge with you other girls."

"How delightful that will be for us!"

"It is rather a bore, though, that she should be ill to-day. I had set my heart on going canoeing this morning. I have been here for a week now, and haven't been out once."

"Can't you go out anyhow?"

"Yes, but it is so tiresome going by one's self. Every one of course has made his or her arrangements, and I am left out in the cold."

"Are you sure of that? Are you sure you must go alone?"

"What do you mean? Can it be that you have no engagement?"

"Why do you wish to know?" Suddenly changing her manner, before his eagerness.

"Because if you have none, I ask you to go with me."

"I will go with you with pleasure," readily throwing Rosy over. "When shall it be?"

"Now, if you wish it." A short walk brings them to the float. She asks him, "Are you fond of paddling?"

"Not exactly. I am devoted to canoeing. Laziness, though is the worst of my many faults. The actual work is not pleasing to me." (When he spoke of his faults she looked at him with a pretty air of disbelief, and softly murmured, "You don't do yourself justice").

"Then won't you let me paddle? I love it so." At first he naturally demurred. As she continued her entreaty, he consented. Reclining on a soft skin in the forward part of the canoe, a cigarette in his mouth, he could not conceal from himself that he had not been so thoroughly comfortable for a long time. His eyes, too, were fixed on what was to him a beautiful picture. His mental remark was, "By Jove, what a stunning figure she has, and how gracefully she does it." Ada Merton deserves his praise. A closely fitting waist of some white stuff displays a figure that nature and art had combined to render perfect. All the lines are perfectly rounded and perfectly proportioned. She has escaped the stumbling block of most women who attempt to improve on nature. She has not a tiny waist, out of all keeping with her shoulders, and bearing on its face proof that the owner knew not how to leave "well enough alone." No—nothing could be in better proportion than hers. Miss Merton is a type of the beauty which appeals to the great masses of men, and to many, who by birth and education should be their superiors. She has the beauty of the senses. Just now it is shown to the utmost ad-

vantage. Long practice has enabled her to bring the science of paddling to a fine art. In every movement there is grace. Carrying the paddle forward, dipping it in the water, the stroke itself and the slight turn at the end, by which she keeps the canoe straight, each is an undeveloped poem. Victor naturally compares her beauty to that of his wife. His judgment will portray the man. Miss Merton's as we have said is of the senses; Edythe is that of the intellect. Which does he prefer?

"How gracefully you paddle, Miss Merton." Passing this by with a smile, she asks, "You were with Miss Knox last evening. What do you think of her? Isn't she beautiful?"

"I thought so until she began to play on the piano. Then I was desillusioné."

"Why, don't you think her playing is lovely, too?"

"That wasn't it. I could not help looking at her hands as she played. I never saw such a resemblance in my life," musingly.

"To what?"

"To the sea-spiders we catch out crabbing. Her fingers are long and scrawny with pointed nails, just like their feelers." Miss Merton laughs, and remarks with a playful grace, "How can you be so mischievous as to make bright, unkind speeches? Dull, unkind speeches do no harm. We forget them as soon as said. It's the bright ones that makes the mischief." After a moment or two she goes on with "Edythe tells me you have decided to live in Philadelphia, I am so glad. We've so few bright people here. (The sentiments in this conver-

sation are Victor's, and Miss Merton's; the author is not responsible.) Don't you think so?"

"You can scarcely expect me to say yes, as I have married one and in the presence of another."

"That don't matter. Edythe and her friends are better than the average, and present company never counts."

"With those exceptions, I think, I must agree with you. Your old families have gone to seed, and need an infusion of new blood."

"You are doing your best to give it to us. That isn't all that's wrong. We travel so little that we become narrow minded. The great majority of our society people never leave home except for the country in its neighborhood, and for a trip up here, and this is little Philadelphia. Those who do go away, shut their eyes to all that is good where they go."

"You are severe; but there is truth in what you say." Suddenly, without warning, a fog sweeps around from behind the island they are skirting, and completely encloses them. Turning, they follow the island for some distance, till Victor advises her to leave it and follow a certain direction. She knowing it to be wrong, complies; but in a few minutes gently turns in the right one, unperceived by him. When they reach the float she thanks him, and says, "If I had been out with any one else, we would be drifting about out there now. How well you know this bay! You haven't been on it for two years either, have you?"

They are not the only ones who have been caught in this fog. Gertie was lazily enjoying the lovely morning. The gentle motion of the waves, the very consciousness

of being on the water was a joy to her. When added to this was the exultant feeling of being in the open air on such a summer day, Gertie was serenely happy. Her gladness was too great for words. Van Etten too had much the same feeling. In silence he gently paddled on, feasting his eyes as much as he dared on the tiny figure before him. As he gazed upon her, Tennyson's words seemed to be whispered by the wind, "A perfect form in perfect rest." At last Gertie, in whom silence for so long a time is unprecedented, murmurs, "How glorious! My happiness is complete." Van Etten thinks his happiness may be nearing its completion, and softly asks, "Is there nothing that could add to it now?"

"Nothing."

Alas for short-lived human bliss!

"When the king of the mist,
Speeding on the wings of a gentle gale,
Her lips in wanton merriment kissed,
All about he spread his thick white veil
To hide the theft."

At once their course was reversed, and Van Etten expended his energy in striving to reach Bar Harbor. He had gone so far as to be beyond the landmarks they knew. No guide apparently was left to him. Puzzled as to how to verify his course, he bethought him of the wind. That might continue to blow from the same quarter, and the chance was worth a trial. It proved a broken reed. After an hour's hard work, he found himself abreast of a little island that had a familiar look about it. "I don't believe you know the way back," came from Gertie,

who was rather provoked at having her morning spoiled in this fashion. Van Etten not wishing to discourage her, answered, "Yes, I think I do." A longer inspection of the island proved it the same one, as that near which they had been when the fog overtook them. He said nothing about his discovery. But her temper and patience were exhausted. In a petulant tone, she exclaimed, "How slow you are! I think you might hurry."

"I am doing the best I can."

"I wish Ned were here."

"What could he do?"

"He wouldn't keep me in this nasty damp fog to catch my death. You don't seem to care whether I do or not. Indeed I suppose you would rather I did."

"I wish your Ned was here to put up with the whims of a girl, who has no respect for others' feelings."

"He wouldn't keep circling round one small island all the time. Did you think I didn't recognize it too? Something must be done."

"Those trees have a very dense foliage, perhaps if we landed we might find shelter."

"We can try it. I wish what Rosy said the other day was true."

"What was that?"

"He called me an angel, and if I had wings I could fly out of this." Landing was no difficult matter, and after they had done so and he had placed the canoe in safety they took refuge among the trees. A little path led them to a charming place of shelter. The branches had been broken off so as to leave an open place suffi-

cient for half a dozen people. Above and around it, so thick was the lattice work of twigs, leaves and vines, that the fog had no opportunity of entering. On a little stone hearth were a few embers of a dying fire, and near by a small lunch basket, its contents untouched. Some good fairy in the shape of a picnic had prepared everything for them.

"I always hated picnics, but I shall dote on them after this!" exclaimed Gertie, as they were partaking of the lunch. Van Etten had rekindled the fire with the cones, pine needles and dead wood that was scattered about in profusion. Gertie rapidly recovered her good humor under the influence of warmth, the lunch, and the delightful scent of the pines. The fire, anon springing into a brilliant blaze as she playfully threw a few cones or branches upon it, and again dying down, lit up her flossy hair and found a mirror in her sparkling eyes. Van Etten lying at her feet found himself so in every sense of the word. But every attempt of his to give the conversation a sentimental turn was useless. She would not listen, and merry jests were all the answers to his most loverlike remarks. When the fog slowly rolled away they hurried back to Bar Harbor. Even so it was seven o'clock before they reached the hotel.



CHAPTER XVIII.

A score of our friends are closely packed in a couple of buck-boards, bound, as Bill feelingly expresses it, on a supper hunt at Somesville. College songs and cheers are the order of the evening. Columbia's noisy yell is answered from the other board by Pennsylvania's long drawn out. Bill has taken refuge from Cissie's vagaries with Gertie, and Rosy Collingshurst foolishly usurped the place left for Van Etten on the other side of her. As they approached a part of the road made dark by overhanging trees, Bill turns to Rosy and asks him whether he has brought a pistol, "for, you know, this is where just such a party as ours was robbed of all their money and jewelry by a gang of masked men on horseback. I suppose you have heard of it?"

"Yes. But that was several years ago, and I thought it was in another part of the island, so I didn't bring mine with me."

"How could you be so careless? I don't think any of the other men had one here. We were all depending on you and you have failed us. If we are robbed it will be all your fault," and Gertie looked stern.

Bill went on, "I hear that some Italian brigands, who immigrated lately, have taken to their old trade up in this direction. They always keep one of the party, and have a pleasant way of cutting off his ears and nose and drawing his teeth, if the ransom be not soon forthcom-

ing. As you are the richest of us and were so careless you must be hostage."

"For your sake, Mr. Collingshurst, I hope there will be no trouble about the ransom."

Rosy looked from one to the other with a countenance from which fear and astonishment had removed the few traces of intellect, to be seen there at any time. A sound of galloping horses was heard, and Bill at once exclaimed, "That must be them! Now then, Rosy, prepare to bid adieu to all your friends."

"Oh, Miss Tremont, don't let them give me up! I'll never be so careless again. Indeed I won't. But I have never loaded it. I don't know how, and it would shoot me sooner than any one else." The sound drew nearer and nearer. "Do ask our driver to turn around! We might escape them." As no one attempted to do so, he wrung his hands, exclaiming, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" Then sinking upon the floor, his face bathed in tears, he moaned, "Perhaps they may not see me here." It was all they could do to reassure him, even after the supposed brigands had passed harmlessly by. He was sure they would come back. At every turn of the road, at every rustle of the leaves, he would give an agonized start; intensified, we fear, by a groan or whoop from Bill, who seemed to take an excessive pleasure in making him ridiculous and uncomfortable.

When the party were about to start for home, after supper, Gertie and Van Etten were not to be found, and it was not until they were about to give up the search that they appeared. Rosy did not return with her, but gladly gave up that seat.

When Victor arrived at the hotel, he said to Edythe, "I wish you would be a little more lively. I am sure you could be all right again, if you would only make up your mind to it. Charlie Calhoun's wife was the life of our party. I'd like to show him that my wife is brighter and more attractive than his."

Some kind friend is always to be found to repeat and exaggerate our mistakes. Ada Merton, who had been carrying on a correspondence with Mrs. Saxon, wrote to her that Gertie was cutting up badly with Van Etten, and told how she had been out all day in a canoe, and had been lost, at Somesville (though nothing at all out of the way had taken place there), and a few other things, not bad in themselves, but made so by the repetition. As she intended, Ned saw the letter.

A little while later some girls and men were gathered on one of the slips, having returned from boating, Rosy Collinghurst drew up in a canoe. As he rose to step out, he lost his balance and plunged headlong into the water. It was not deep, so his feet stuck out, waving violently in the air. Several men went to his rescue and easily fished him out. The instant he was on his feet again, in a hurried whisper he asked Bill, "How did it look. Are the girls laughing at me? Am I such a sight?" To have any one, every lock of whose hair is running a race around or over his face, whose teeth are chattering and lips blue, from every point of whose clothes little streams are pouring, ask you whether he is such a sight, would be rather too much for most men, but Bill kept his face straight while answering: "They were all en-

chanted. We have never really had a chance to see how small and aristocratic your feet were. By Jove, they're charming. I would learn to walk on my hands, if I were you."

"Would you? I believe I will." He kept his word, as many a bump on his head can testify. As he hurried up to the hotel, the others kept up a running fire of jokes about him. "I believe he proposes to every girl he meets," said one. "Yes, and the worst of it is, he won't take no for an answer. Half his conversation consists in trying to persuade you to accept him."

"He is so conceited, he thinks every one of us in love with him, only we are too coy to accept him, or think ourselves too far beneath him. I wish I could get rid of him. Snubbing won't work."

Cissie said with a smile, "I can tell you how. You know he never comes near me, though he was once quite attentive."

"How did you manage it?" they asked in chorus.

"I accepted him, and he hasn't been near me since."

They took her suggestion. Half a dozen accepted him in the next two days, and he left at once.

Taking advantage of the last of the moon, a large party drives to Otter Cliffs. As they alight, Victor pairs off with Ada Merton, for Edythe is still unwell. Cissie and Bill, always adventurous, climb to the top of the Cliff and take a position where they can command every rock. In front, the sea lies calm and dark, save in the moon's path. Below are the rocks now jutting out to luxuriate in a sea of light, now retreating in to the darkest corners lit only by a cigarette, as it were a tiny lighthouse

to warn all comers of the dangerous reefs hid in those dark depths. Cissie, as she reaches the top, exclaims, "Look at the moon's wake or trail, whichever it is! Doesn't it look like a caricature of those pictures in Sunday-school books of angels innumerable fading away into the distance, each one with a star or halo about its head? I do believe a lot of imps are doing it on purpose." Bill, without answering, breaks out with, "Rosy Collingshurst was the fellow you accepted and for whom you threw me over? I am sure of it."

"Yes. It was he."

"Was that quite fair? I believed you in earnest when you said you had accepted some one else. Now, since it seems you only accepted him to get rid of him, don't you think you should try me again, to make up for the way you treated me?"

"Try you again? No, thanks! One trial was quite enough. Besides, do you think I could ever love a man who does nothing, is nothing, but a buffoon? For though you are very amusing, still no one can do more than laugh at you."

"What would you have me do? I doubt whether I have brains enough to accomplish anything, and then I have no profession."

"I can't pretend to say what you prefer. I am too much of a shuttlecock myself to know my own mind for longer than five minutes at a time, so I certainly can't be expected to know yours. Perhaps that is the reason I always like a man with some settled purpose. You have money, and a man with money can always do something."

That night Bill says to himself, "Cissie is right. I am nothing but a jester. Only a few of my friends do more than laugh at me. Most fellows think me a jolly fellow to have around, with more wit than brains, and they certainly don't respect me. What shall I do?" Then, after more thought, "I suppose a man ought to look after his own property. I'll go down to Brazil to see how things are getting on. It will be a bore, though; still, Cissie wants me to do something. It will be a good thing to be away from her too; if she cares at all for me, it will be the best thing to bring her round" The community was startled by the disappearance of Paley the next morning. He left early, and Victor and Gertie were the only ones whom he had bade good-bye. A single line to Cissie told her he was off to South America.

This sketch is lengthening out at such a rate, that the reader must pardon us, if we hurry over some scenes, that we would fain have described more fully. The first of these is a hop at Bryn Mawr, in the beginning of September, after all have returned from Bar Harbor. What pleasure the regular frequenter has in these hops; a floor as near perfection as anything human art can contrive; for the carpet there allows you to glide as easily as any waxed floor, without the uncomfortable feeling that the latter gives to many, of not knowing whether the next step will be taken on it or in the air: Herzberg, of whom we have spoken, rolling out his bass notes in perfect time, and playing the most delightful music. Long windows opened to the floor, let in the refreshing air, or let you out for a walk, a flirtation, or ice water. It is perhaps

as well we must hurry on; for we could not do its fun and gayety justice, with its mozambiques, lancers danced by thirty-two in one set, rollicking galops, and then such waltzes.

Gertie is in trouble again. She and Ned have a standing engagement for a certain waltz whenever played. To-night, by mistake, she has also given this waltz by number to Van Etten. It is the last time she expects to see him for some time; but it is also about the first time she has seen Ned since her return. She is walking with the latter, who is angry at himself because he cannot keep away from her. Telling him about her difficulty, she hesitates as to whom to give it. This enrages him, for Ada Merton's venomous shots have done their work. He exclaims, "Give it to him, then. As it will be so much more pleasant for all. I have heard of your behaviour at Bar Harbor, and congratulate you on your conquest." He turns, vaults over the railing without a thought of the drop of a dozen feet, and is off in a desperate hurry. His old way of working off his fury. Gertie too is angered, and dances almost every dance after that with Van Etten. A performance which we may be sure reaches Ned's ears.

Edythe has been sitting near one of the windows, watching the dancers. Strange to say, she has been alone most of the time. As she has declined to dance, one man after another has retired, surprised at her refusal. Jack, her faithful squire, is not here, and there is no other who, since her marriage, would give up a dance at such a place for her sake. Cissie coming up asks why she is not dancing. Edythe answers in a voice

so low no one else can hear, that Victor is displeased, because she will not dance with a friend of his she despises. Not wishing to displease him more by dancing with others, when she has refused this one, she has given it up altogether for to-night. Jack at this moment arrives. He, as she knows, has been tramping way off in the country after a dog for her. The dog, a cross between a setter and a spaniel, with the former's size, but all the latter's beauty in face, and long, brown, silky hair, springs upon her, and in every way his canine intelligence can suggest, shows that he is ready to welcome her as his mistress. It is one of those remarkable instantaneous affections that dogs do sometimes show. She now will have a faithful servitor, even to death. Cissie asks what he is to be called. Edythe answers she don't know.

"As Jack gave him to you, why don't you call him 'Jacobite?'"

"As he has some King Charles blood, that will be capital, I shall do so." So Jacobite he is named, and may he prove more fortunate than his namesakes.

A little time afterwards Victor and Edythe are in one of the Germantown hare and hound hunts. They are in the lead; but he makes a mistake, which he does not discover till the rest are ahead of them. Nothing daunted, for both are superbly mounted, they dash on rapidly, cutting the others down. They near an awkward leap. It is not high, but drops decidedly on the other side into a narrow road with a steep bank opposite. Victor takes it; his horse just saving itself. Edythe's, however, makes a little longer leap, and crashes into the bank. For a moment horse and rider lie there, with

only faithful Jacobite barking over them. Hé has followed his mistress and is now calling for help as hard as he can. It soon comes. Edythe is scarcely hurt at all. Victor who has been called back, says to her, when they are alone, "Why couldn't you be more careful, you have made me lose all chance of this run." Ada Merton by a lucky accident, manages to shorten the distance, and is in first, the winner.



CHAPTER XIX.

The beauty and fashion of Philadelphia, or rather a large portion of it, is gathered at Belmont Park; for the City Troop are giving the first of their races. Edythe, Gertie and Cissie are together, attended by a number of men. Jack and Victor are both to ride for the opening race for the Troop cup, entries for which are limited to members. Edythe finds time to say to Gertie, "I wonder what has happened to Victor. Jack was very anxious to ride 'Bruce' (her horse) for the Captain's cup. I think he would win; but Victor said Bruce should not run, why, I don't know." Gertie thought she could tell why, but didn't. She felt sure that not much love was lost between him and Jack. Edythe went on, "Now Jack has no mount and I am so sorry. He wants to ride so much for it." The bell rings, and one by one the troopers in their becoming uniforms bring their horses out for a warming gallop. Victor is a hot favorite, as his horse is a well known thoroughbred, which has won several races, while none of the others are better than good hacks. The odds have run as high as 5 to 1 on him against the field. As the flag drops on a capital start, every one is naturally interested in the first race. Victor soon brings his horse to the front to make the running. The gap between him and the field rapidly widens, he is safe to win hands down, and the spectators settle back disappointed but not surprised, when just at

the turn a gray streak flashes out from the ruck. It rapidly gains on the leader. Victor perfectly confident of winning, is only aroused to his danger by the cries of "Well ridden, Harden! well ridden!" Turning, he finds the gray at his bay's haunches. He calls upon his horse, but too late. Jack dashes on, the winner by a neck. Cheer after cheer goes up for this brilliant piece of riding. The other races go off quite well. Some are close, others mere walk-overs. When Victor joins our party in the grand stand, it is naturally in anything but a pleasant humor. As he takes a seat by Gertie, she remarks, "It is too bad Jack has no mount for the Captain's cup. He is so anxious too, and rides so well."

Victor answers sarcastically "As Paley would say, he is metaphorically crying 'A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!'"

"Well, Richard got his horse."

"But still, was unsuccessful."

"Jack isn't hunchbacked, so he may do better." Cissie breaks in, "What is that?"

"I was saying how sorry I was that Jack was not to ride in the steeple chase."

"But he is! Ned just told me."

"What horse does he ride?"

"Which is it, Ned?"

"Paul Drinker was at a friend's wedding Monday, and he has been at a wedding ever since, so his friends don't think him in a fit condition to ride. Jack takes his horse."

"Not Phoenix!" from Edythe.

"The same."

"Why, he may kill him. That horse always bolts in a race, and generally manages to get rid of his rider. Jack is so unlucky with his riding."

"Let us wish him better luck this time."

Apparently he is to have better luck, for Phoenix takes the first leaps in splendid form, and everything seems lovely. When just as Jack is about to lift him for the water jump, he swerves and dashes off. Quick as a flash Jack comes down on him with the curb he has insisted upon having. Phoenix is brought up standing, and is slowly forced back. Just as he approaches the ditch, Jack digs both spurs into him and with a loud shout, forces him over, almost a standing leap. It is a gallant effort, but just falls short. A struggle, an effort to gather himself, a long stagger, and horse and man fall forward on the ground. Jack, who had taken his feet from the stirrups, is thrown clear, and in a moment is on his feet, brings his horse to his, is on his back and away. A long chase, yet he urges on the subdued and trembling animal. It is too far, he cannot make it, still every one cheers him for his pluck. When by a lucky accident both the others make a wrong turn. When they regain the course, Jack has all but overtaken them. Hurrah! He has reached them, and now begins a ding-dong contest for the lead. First one and then the other shows to the fore. Jack comes to the front and then drops back. Once more the cry goes up "Well ridden Harden!" as by a well-timed rush he forces his horse's nose by the leader and wins with a short head to spare.

Edythe tries to bring Victor back to a good humor on their drive home. Knowing how much he relishes Bill's

adventures, she relates one. One summer, while he was still a boy in college, he was visiting in the country. A riding party is arranged. Bill finding himself too early, takes his horse to where some of the girls are resting under a tree. Lazy as usual, he dismounts, stretching himself at full length upon the ground. He, not wishing the trouble of holding his horse, gives the reins a turn around one foot. The horse readily grazes for a few minutes. Then finding he is not really hungry, decides to take a little gallop on his own account. Just as Bill comes to the point of one of his funniest stories, and is sitting up to give it more effect, his horse points the story in a far more amusing manner than any he could contrive, by jerking him out flat, and starting off down the road dragging him by this one foot. Bill makes a series of frantic grabs for the reins, but each time is jerked out straight and thrown back on his head. The dust is so thick that the rescuing party cannot see either horse or man, and at each step are afraid of stepping on him. There is no telling what might have happened, if the reins had not broken before any harm was done to anything but clothes. Bill was found half buried and wholly choked by the dust, which was at least half an inch thick all over his white riding trousers. On his face it had caked, and his coat was torn up the middle. Edythe laughed heartily at the recollection. Nothing, however, could bring a smile to Victor's face. The time had gone by when she could drive away a frown at any time. When they reach home it is to receive the news that Dr. Dixon is dead, and the frown deepens. As Edythe takes off her wraps, he notices that she is wear-

ing the colors that Jack wore in the steeple chase. His smouldering fury at last breaks forth.

“You even dare wear his colors. I knew you would rather he won than I; but I didn’t believe you would openly show your shameful preference. Take them off! Take them off at once I say!” Edythe looks at him in astonishment, and declines to do so. Victor makes a stride toward her, exclaiming with an oath, “You shall!” and tears them from her dress. He throws them on the floor, but has no time to trample them under foot as he intended. Jacobite, who has been watching him with an angry eye, ever since he began to speak in such furious tones, as he tore the ribbon away, sprang forward with an angry growl. Edythe calls him back, but too late. A heavy metallic ornament is on the table by Victor’s hand. In a moment he has hurled it at poor Jacobite with all the venomous force, the thought that he too came from Harden, can lend his arm. It strikes the animal on the head, and with a single moan stretches him lifeless on the floor, a victim to his own fidelity and man’s mad jealousy. Edythe stoops over him with tears in her eyes, exclaiming, “Oh, Victor! how could you?” With a parting word, “You prefer even his dog to your husband,” he hurries from the room. Rather sobered by the result of his fury, and perhaps somewhat ashamed of it too. Fortunately it turns out that the dog was only stunned, and by careful treatment recovers. As soon as he is well enough, Edythe wisely sends him to her mother’s out of harm’s way.

Victor, when he married her, had been desperately in love; but it had since been growing cold day by day.

Before the marriage she had been sought after by more men than any other girl in society. It appealed to his pride and self-conceit to carry her off from so many rivals, as did also the thought of having so beautiful and accomplished a wife. Since then she had been in bad health, had lost some of her beauty in consequence, and he had not been able to show her off to his friends as he wished. Then he had not the incentive of striving with others for her love. He knew it was entirely his; his words of a few minutes before to the contrary notwithstanding. Besides, Ada Merton was near him, with her dangerous fascinations, ever ready to enchant him; coy when he was bold; bold when he was not so; always careful to have a string of admirers at her beck and call, so as to furnish the same attraction that Edythe formerly had done. Steadily and too rapidly Victor was drifting, whither? Time alone can tell.

Everything is at sixes and sevens. The breach between Ned and Gertie has become so wide that nothing short of a convulsion of nature seems strong enough to bring them together. While Bill Paley is away in South America, so that even light-hearted Cissie has cause to feel blue. Remarkable accounts have been coming to Philadelphia as to what he has achieved in the way of emancipation. He had liberated all the slaves upon his plantations. In consequence of which Dom Pedro had summoned him to Court. He then devised a scheme by which all the slaves would become free in seven years, and succeeded in having it made a law, so much pleased was the Emperor by his amusing ways and by the ability he showed. Cissie, though proud

of what he had done and glad that it was she, who had led to his going there, said to Edythe, "Yes, I sent him away. Yet sometimes I feel sorry I did so. Not a word has he written to me, and I very much fear that he may change his mind. If I could only see him for an instant or have a line from him to say that he still feels the same, I should be so glad. I never knew that I loved him, till I was afraid of losing him. I cannot do without him." So Bill's perseverance is likely to win, though it is highly probable he will be sorry for it when he comes home.



CHAPTER XX.

The sun has been pouring down with a tropical force upon the streets of Rio Janeiro, this Christmas Eve. So hot has it been, that even the busy tribe of shop-goers has been forced to suspend operations throughout most of the day. But now, as the sun has only a few hours longer in the sky, and a blessed cloud passes before it, they pour from every side, eager to complete their list of gifts for the morrow. Elbowing his way through the crowd, observing all with a merry twinkle in his eye, comes our friend, Bill Paley. His own Christmas shopping has been done and all sent off weeks before. The joy in every face, the merry jests of passing acquaintances, bring back to him his home and make him long to see it again. Why should he not? His work here is about done. He knows that the Emperor will want him to stay, to help in working out the details of his plan for Emancipation. Yet he can come back for that, if on further thought it should seem necessary. The Alcasar is before him and he drops in to think it over. Rio Janeiro's favorite Opera Boufe Actress is treading the boards, so all the seats near the stage are occupied, in fact, every seat in the café seems to be taken. Off in a corner there still remains one. A rough looking man is on the other side of the table, which is just large enough for two. Paley makes some passing remark which the other answers in a gruff voice, and with a bad accent, seemingly Eng-

lish. Bill is rather surprised at this exhibition of rudeness ; for all he had done was required by Brazilian etiquette. Calling for a light wine, he lights a cigarette and begins to hum an old favorite of his, of course in English. It may be that he sang out of tune, for it seemed to annoy his table companion, who looks up at him with an expression of impatience. This does not affect Bill much, who goes on with his song, and when it is through begins another. This is too much, and the other takes his departure in very short order. With a smile Paley dismisses all thought of him and goes on with his inward debate. He is rapidly coming to the conclusion that he might as well sail by the next steamer, when the sun comes out from behind the cloud, and the sparkle of something bright catches his eye. Looking again, he sees it is the brass mountings of a hand-bag, by the other side of the table. After a few moment's contemplation, for some undefined reason, he takes the trouble to get up, walk around and pick it up. The catch is insecurely fastened, so the satchel opens, as he lifts it, spilling out a number of papers. With a curse on his curiosity, he stoops to pick them up and idly glances at them. They prove somewhat interesting, and he carefully puts them away, not in the satchel, but in his own pocket. A friend joins him, and, though he tries hard, cannot persuade him to give up his intention of returning. A few days more see him on his way to England, which he finds is the quickest way home.

This same evening Edythe has gone home to spend Christmas with her mother, where Victor is to join them afterward. It is just at dusk, and he is sitting bent over,

staring at the wood fire as it shoots up in fitful flashes; in its apparent irresolution and indecision, a fitting emblem of the burning cauldron of passion which is seething and bubbling within him. Perplexity knits his brow. His mind is engaged with a series of pictures furnished him by memory and imagination. On the one hand is Ada Merton, more fascinating than ever, drawing him on step by step. On the other Edythe, as he had first known her, happy, beloved and worthy to be both. Then followed a number of scenes, now with one as a centre figure, now with the other. In each Miss Merton charms him, Edythe disappoints him, more and more. How different from what he thought her the latter had proved to be! How blind he must have been to prefer her! What a bad bargain, what a mess he had made of it. "Yes, by Jove! I'll do it!" and he half rises from his chair. When out of the flames he seems to see Bessie's childish eyes looking reproachfully at him. He drops back. How could he ever think of them again; should he do it? Their innocent love would be turned to fear and aversion. They would haunt him ever after. Could he destroy the sweetest memory of his life? Deceive and betray the trust of her uncle? Slowly the thought of darling little Bess drives all else away. He is lost in dreams of her, of the old Kentucky home, and of what he might have been, had she lived. With such a sister always at his side, how could he go wrong? She would have taken an interest in all he did, would have helped him out of all his scrapes and been his confidante, scolding him and petting him at the same time. She would have believed in him far more thoroughly,

than he did in himself. Then to hear her praise and see her happy look at each success he achieved, would have urged him on to make good use of the opportunities he had never lacked. Mournful recollections of his wasted youth and early manhood came crowding back upon him. What would he not give to live the last ten years of his life again? Too late! That bitter thought ne'er came to any one with greater strength than now. But no! It shall not be too late! He will retrace his steps! he will do what is right! he will become an upright honorable man! and nothing again shall make Bessie sorrow for him.

With stealthy step, the noiseless, well-trained butler enters, one might almost say in the black livery of Satan, and in a moment the lights are lit. With the cold glare of the gas, comes a sudden revulsion of feeling. Ada Merton appears to his excited fancy, tenfold more lovely. How mawkishly sentimental he is becoming! One might think he was an old woman, or a miss in her teens lamenting over the downfall of her favorite hero. He laughs an unmirthful laugh. In an instant he has risen, hurried to a writing desk and dashed off a note. He has just time to reach the Merton's for dinner, as he had half promised. On his way he drops the letter in a box. Just as soon as it has left his hand he would give all he had to recover it. He even meditates attempting an assault upon the box; but as that is impracticable, he passes on and soon forgets his momentary regret in the enjoyment of the subtle poison, that is insinuating itself into his very life-blood.

Why is there not some special providence to prevent

such letters from reaching their destination? Many a harmless note goes astray. Yet let there be any harm that can be done by one, it will surely arrive on time. This is no exception. Why is the postman honest and careful? Why when a box within a block is broken open, is this left untouched? The note next to it is mislaid in the hurry and bustle of a Christmas mail; while this one escapes to reach its destination in safety.

At the Saxon's, Victor is scarcely missed. Jack and Gertie have come to join them at dinner, and she and Ned have made a truce for the evening; so it seems like old times again. Edythe has not been as gay for months. Jack's bad luck culminated with her wedding, and fortune tired of buffeting him about, had begun to favor him. All he undertook now was successful, and to-night he had Edythe to himself, so naturally he was happy. Even Mrs. Saxon seemed so lively and so young, that Edythe said she must be "fey." In merry talk they stayed, till they could wish each other "Merry Christmas." The night waxed very old before, with regrets that so pleasant an evening had been so short, Gertie and Jack took their leave.

CHAPTER XXI.

It is late the next day before Mrs. Saxon and Edythe have their breakfast. When it is finished, they turn their attention to the mail, which brings many an affectionate remembrance. At last Edythe opens an envelope addressed in Victor's well-known writing. As she reads, her face grows deadly pale, the room seems to swim. For a moment she is dazed, then with a cry of "Jack's warning! That dream!" she throws herself on her knees, burying her face in her mother's lap and bursts into tears. Mrs. Saxon takes the letter she threw down and reads:

DEAR EDYTHER,

I have just discovered that we made a bad blunder. Our marriage was not legal. The laws of Kentucky require a license to be taken out, and through some oversight it was not done. As we have not been able to hit it off very well together, I think you will agree with me, that there will be no need of your returning to my house. I shall have your things sent to you at your mother's.

Yours, etc.,

VICTOR ROLAND.

P. S. Any allowance within reason which you will name I will give you.

For an instant, she too cannot comprehend it. While her heart gives great leaps, striking against her bosom

as if it would seek some escape from the dreadful truth. Then as the true meaning comes clearly before her mind, the hand that gently rests on Edythe's dark tresses grows cold, while a fixed and glassy stare obscures her eyes.

Edythe's paroxysms of weeping becomes fainter and fainter and as if through a dense mist and far away in the distance she hears her canary singing away in a merry song, as though happiness and sorrow, honor and shame, life and death were naught to him, and then the whining of Jacobite, who seems to feel that something is wrong. Then loud and clear above it all there seems to sound his song "At the Ferry." It brings again to her that first evening but not as to one, who acted a part, but as to a stranger. She sees herself and wonders, who she can be. She hears the song and tries to think who the singer was. Then again it brings back the memory of that evening on the river. At last she realizes that she and Victor were the actors. It all comes back to her "Love will last forevermore!" Aye! how true that was! A few short months and all his had passed away. How false the man, who could, with those few cold words, announce the destruction of her whole life without the slightest regret or shame for his part in it. Could she ever have loved him? Preferred him to Jack, her noble, chivalric Jack, the very soul of honor? Never! She must have been dreaming, it must all be but a horrid nightmare. Then she tastes a sickly flavor of blood and with a sinking heart she knows it to be true. Why this dreadful silence? Why don't her mother speak? Has she no word for her daughter now?

Will she too despise and cast her off as all the world will? "Mother! Mother!" is her agonized cry. In despair she catches her hands. Their deadly chill she feels not. Looking up appealingly to her face, she meets only that stony stare. "Mother! Mother! don't look at me like that! It was not my fault! Mother won't you speak to me? I am still your daughter, still the Edythe you loved so well. Oh Mother!" and she falls back. Blessed unconsciousness has come to relieve her anguish and save her reason.

Outside the dog still whines, sniffing at the air and impatient of restraint. Why don't his mistress or the other silver-haired lady come to let him loose. Is he altogether forgotten? Outside the merry Christmas chimes are ringing to summon all sorts and conditions of men to give thanks for the birth of a Saviour. Outside a poor boy hurries by bearing a turkey almost as big as himself. Outside kindhearted wealth is extending its charity, rendered still more kind-hearted by the bright, crisp morning and by the joyous "Merry Christmas" of more than one passing acquaintance. All young and old are affected by the mirth and jollity that is floating in the air. The school girls laugh at some teasing jest; the millionaire thinks of some noble work he is about to do, happy in his self-righteousness; the workingman of the new gown with which he is going to surprise his Mary—none have time for what is passing only a few feet away. A minister passes with dignified step on his way to preach of God's mercy and all-pervading providence. Little does he dream that behind that curtained window is an instance he would find hard to explain, that there

his ministrations are far more needed than in the stately pile, where he worships. Outside, all is bustle and gayety; inside, nothing save the stillness of four cold walls, no sound or sign of life to lighten them. It has become so appalling that even the bird was oppressed by it. After two or three appealing little calls he flutters mournfully to the bottom of his cage. Scattered about the room, unheeded are those kindly remembrances their friends have taken so much pleasure in sending. If their friends only knew what a scene they had witnessed. A few brief minutes alone have passed since they were opened each with an affectionate allusion. The minutes drag out their weary length. Will nothing break this awful stillness? Alas no! It is the stillness of death!

* * * * *

To the canary's delight the silence is at last broken by Ned's cheerful voice, ringing out loudly in a joyful song, as he dashes upstairs two at a time, in very wantonness of spirits. It is a long day since he has been so gay and happy, for fate seems at length to favor him. Gertie, he hears, has refused Van Etten and seems about to return to her old love. He pushes open the door, with a cheery "Merry Christmas, Mother," when what a scene meets his eye. At her mother's feet lies Edythe, her whole appearance betokening unconsciousness; while above, sitting coldly in her chair, is the form he loves so dearly. At the first glance he realizes all he has lost.

* * * * *

Gertie fortunately arriving, at once takes charge. Fortunately for Ned thinking both mother and sister dead, sits in stolid silence, heeding nothing and deeming

everything useless; while the frightened and weeping servants are gathered upon the stairs, willing but knowing not what to do. She at once sends for the Doctor and has Edythe removed to her room, where such restoratives as she can think of are applied. Ned obedient to her entreaty retires to his room. As she is about to leave the scene of this heart-rending tragedy, to go to Edythe, the letter attracts her attention. A glance at it and she understands all. Her first impulse is to throw it in the fire; but something checks her, and she puts it in her pocket, resolving to give it to Jack, for whom she has sent. As soon as Edythe shows signs of returning life, she remains alone with the Doctor, sending the servants from the room, for she dreads what they might learn from her first words. The dangerous period is passed without her showing any signs of recollection, and she falls into a deep sleep, produced by some narcotic. Gertie then sends for Jack, who has been with Ned. They ask simultaneously for each other's patients.

"Ned is in a frightful state; he will do nothing but sit staring at the fire, without a word, without a tear. How I wish he would cry! This silent grief is by far the worst. If only I could find anything to change the current of his thoughts, to distract his attention. I am almost afraid to leave him alone. Could you not see him? It might be just what he needs."

"If I thought that, I would gladly; but I have behaved so badly to him, that it would do more harm than good."

"I don't think so. But you—you look worn out, and no wonder. No! you had better not go through an-

other trying scene. Should you give out, I don't know what we would do. Well, I shall have to try once more to make him think of something else."

"Stay a moment; I can help you do that. He must be told sooner or later, and this may be the best time. Read that?" She hands him Victor's letter. A dangerous light comes into his eyes, and it takes a strong effort to enable him to command himself. That iron will is almost worn out in the struggle against the grief he feels, as deeply as any other of them.

With "I shall show it to him," he goes up again. Ned pays no attention as he takes a chair by his side. "Ned there are others to think of now. Edythe must be cared for, and she has far more to pain and grieve her than even you have." Ned shakes his head, bowing it still lower. "You must prepare yourself for another shock. Act the man. There is work to be done. Don't sit brooding here in this womanish fashion. It is unlike you. Listen to me. No, first read this." And once again that cruel letter discloses its writer's dastardly purpose. Gertie was indeed right. It did change the current of his thoughts. Springing to his feet, he paces the floor in angry vehemence; exclaiming from time to time, "The scoundrel! the cowardly villain! would that I had him here! I'd strangle him!" with many more of the same kind. After a while, growing quieter, his thoughts turn from Victor to his victim. "Poor Edythe, how will she bear this? She was so bright and so happy, and now to lose her mother and her name at once. May all the curses of hell light on

the hand that struck this blow!" and flinging the letter from him as though it were a scorpion, he threw himself on the bed—the strong man crying like a child. And never was that sad sound heard by gladder ears than Jack's. He knew full well its healing virtue, that nothing else can have. How differently those two men bore their sorrows. The one a giant in strength and in endurance, where bodily power would avail, had broken down at once under the mental shock. The other as weak and insignificant physically as Ned was strong, bore up under the blow with a calmness and self-command that seemed to defy fate to do its worst. It must not be thought that this was because of any lack of feeling. No! Mrs Saxon's death he felt, as we have said, as deeply as any of them; while his grief for Edythe's position was by far the most severe. To the others he held out the hope that it might not be true, that Victor might have lied. For himself he had no such hope. He felt that it was all, alas, too true. He undertakes also the task of interviewing Victor, in hopes that he may be able to arrange with him so that Edythe shall not suffer in the world's opinion.

Victor proved stubborn and hard to deal with. At first he declined decidedly to speak with Jack upon the subject; and though he persevered with wonderful patience under the insults that were heaped upon him and her, yet he was only able to obtain from Victor the unsatisfactory answer that he would probably not mention the subject for a few days. As he left him he received a telegram from Kentucky, which could not have been reassuring; for if possible the sadness of his face grew

deeper. Well might he look sad—he was on his way to bid farewell to the mortal remains of her he had loved almost as a mother, for he had never known his own. Edythe and Ned have left their last kisses on the wax-like lips of the dead. The white-haired pastor, they loved so well, has come to perform the last rites over her, whom as a child he had admitted to the Church, whom later in life he had united to the man of her choice, and whose children he had baptized and confirmed. He reads the beautiful words of the service in a voice broken by the memories that are awakened within. Another of those he has known and loved throughout his fifty years of service among us, is about to join the many whom loving hands and loving hearts have laid to rest. In a grave overlooking that lovely river, where so much joy and life can be seen, Mrs. Saxon finds her resting place in God's acre. In very truth in the midst of life we are in death. Below, is the Park with its throngs of passing carriages laden with men and women, toiling, sorrowing or laughing in this world of cares; above, the peaceful City of the Dead, where so many find their long wished for rest and happiness. All the many friends and kinsfolk have gone, and only Jack and Gertie remain to share her children's grief. It is well they are there, for Ned and Edythe would have had no thought of time. In a silence almost appalling they drive home. What a different meaning had that word now, when she, who made it all in all to them, is there no more! Edythe can no longer find there love and sympathy in all her joys and sorrows. Her mother, how sadly the word sounds now, who knew her every thought,

was there no longer, to show her what is wrong, to guide her to the right. None else could know how she had guarded her, how protected from all the evil that lurks at each turn of our lives. And what had been the result? Edythe sorrowed far more bitterly for all her mother's wasted care and energy, than what she must suffer from Victor's selfish villainy.

Ned, looking back into the far distance, thinks of his mother, from the first moment he can remember, as his ideal of all that was good and holy. How proud he had been when for the first time he had lent her his shoulder, and she had said he should be her little staff and support. How he had tried to live up to it when his father died. He feared it had only been to fail. She had been so proud of all his successes, whether in studies or in athletics, which were too often he thought in the latter alone. She had been interested in whatever pleased him. Alas! he had not been the son he should have been. Too often he feared he had given that loving heart pain, which her countenance would not betray. He had too often repaid her affectionate care with sorrow and disappointment, and now it was too late to repair his errors. She was gone, from whom he had never heard an unkind word. May she see from above what was in his heart. Ned was lost in remorseful memories. Then a thought of Edythe came to him, and for the first time rebellious thoughts rose in his mind. Was it a just, was it a righteous Providence which would strike down a mother just when her daughter stood most in need of her, and yet let the one who had wrought all this harm go free? No! It could not be right nor just

that such a man should live. He— Their door is reached and as Jack says farewell, he tells Ned, “I have just received an answer to my telegram. The County Clerk’s Office at R —— was burnt to the ground a few weeks ago. All the records were destroyed, so our last hope is gone.” The clouds seem to be closing in around them so densely that no escape seems possible. Well may that evening be passed in the depths of profound gloom. Well may Gertie (for Edythe thinks of her mother alone) exclaim, “My God, is there no way out of our despair?”



CHAPTER XXII.

Orion, master of the winter sky, is shining resplendent this cool, sharp evening. His ever open eye looks down on the great city with all its depths of squalid misery and heights of noble ambition. It casts but a hurried glance at Alaska Street, with its crowds of dirty men and women huddled together in an abomination of filth and crime; the latter, alas! not confined within its narrow precincts. It dwells contently upon the numberless spires that faith has raised to glorify its Maker. Almost obscured by the dazzling electricity, it can make out but little of the gilded vice in the city's centre, and hurrying on rests for an instant only on the huge pile, where the millions of a people, foolish and befooled, has been squandered on useless and magnificent ugliness. Then it changes its course. Turning to where Holy Trinity raises its stately tower above a mass of velvet-like turf and fine old trees; it is in the heart of the social world. Our journey in its company is almost ended. Yet we shall take one more glance. In sorrow it looks in through the window at where Edythe lies sleeping. Worn out by all she has undergone, she slumbers at last, yet the pillows are drenched with tears. A form, typical of its own, is descending the stairs; the door has closed behind him. It hurries on before, to a handsome house on the most fashionable highway of the city; where, though its feeble rays are extinguished by the gas light streaming from the windows, it waits to see—what we shall see.

Within, a jolly half-dozen of Victor's boon companions are gathered at his board. The occasion is a small stag supper, that he had lost to one of them. Though the winner had proposed to postpone it, on account of Mrs. Saxon's death, Victor would not hear of it. The supper is over—and some one proposes—and all agree that each in turn shall sing a song or tell a story. The mirth grows fast and furious. Story and song follow in quick succession, each accompanied by the opening of a fresh bottle. Most of them, we fear, would scarcely bear repetition in a drawing-room, so we shall not give them here. Victor's turn coming, they all call on him for a song of his own composition, as he has quite a knack of knocking them off, as he terms it. "All right, fellows! Here's one that I wrote for this evening. As none of you are married, you can give the chorus with a will."

VICTOR'S SONG.

While I've life, I'll sing, drink and play,
As none but a Benedict can ;
For who can be frank, free and gay,
Tied down as a young married man ?
Out-talked by his saucy wife
In every domestic strife,
A poor sorry fool is he.

Chorus :

Married men must early to bed,
And ne'er late at the club can be.
We'll sing and drink in their stead,
Such merry, merry bachelors we.

As so grateful a freedom is ours,
 Why give it up for but one
 Of the smiles, that on us beauty showers?
 Since now they all can be won.
 I'll never wed a wife;
 But all throughout my life,
 A jolly bachelor be.

Chorus:

Married men must early to bed,
 And ne'er late at the club can be.
 We'll flirt and we'll drink in their stead,
 And merry, merry bachelors be.

Amid the applause that greets this effort, one of his neighbors remarks to Victor, "That's pretty good for a man six months married. We might think, if we didn't know you, that you were a grass widower." Victor, his tongue loosened by wine, is just about to answer, and there is no knowing what he might have said, when the butler tells him that Mr. Saxon is in the drawing-room, and won't go away without seeing him.

"Did you tell him I had company?"

"Indeed I did, sir. But he says he has something so important to say to you, sir, that he will come up here, if you won't go down to him, sir."

"Tell him to do it then; or no! stay! I'll go down and see what it is he wants." When he enters the room, Ned's face for an instant flames up with angry color, then cools down into a hard set look, but there is danger in his eye as he mutters, "I must keep cool for Edythe's sake." He speaks as if each word was uttered only by the exercise of the strongest will, and parting with each cost

him dear. "I have come to ask, whether you will marry my sister. A separation will take place at once. You shall have no further trouble."

"No! A thousand times no! I have given her one trial and that is quite enough. So she has sent the dear brother round to smooth things over. Now she will be the one to eat humble pie. I have shown her who is master. Now she shall come cringing and fawning back to where she thought she ruled. Ah, no! She shall find I am not the fool she took me for."

Trembling with fury, yet speaking in a tone, that is calmness itself to the tempest within, Ned says, "She has found you the most cowardly villian and unmitigated scoundrel, and would not even look at you again. I came here without her knowledge. Since fair play can not induce you to do what is right. I command you to do it!"

"Oh! You have come to threats," the dutch courage supplied by liquor, rising within him. "'One man may lead a horse to water, but twenty cannot make him drink.' I care not what you may do."

"Think once more. I give you one more chance," in a determined tone.

"How kind that is! So the roistering brother has come down from his high horse. He roars and blusters no longer."

"You absolutely refuse?" demanded Ned, his rage rapidly rising.

"Absolutely, and nothing you could do would make me. By the way, tell that fool of a Harden that he has my permission to marry her now, as he was so anxious

to before. He had better not try again to get ahead of his betters. Let this be a lesson to him. Tell him, too, I shall keep still no longer. I don't intend to remain a bachelor, and I have found some one, who will make a wife, worth a dozen of such goody-goody namby-pamby prudes as your sister and his sweetheart. She will not be quite so much of a stuck-up prude as she used to be. The world will have its own thoughts about her position. I bequeath to him, tell him, my—"

"By God! that word bequeath shall be truer than you meant!" exclaimed Ned, whose temper, held under control as long as his insults were for him alone, burst forth in a mighty torrent when his sister's name was brought in. "You have done all the harm you shall in this world." A report, and Victor falls at his feet without a word. Ned bends over him to see that his bullet has done its work. Then as the servants and friends rush in, he hands over the still smoking weapon to one of them, asks that the police and Jack be at once notified and then relapses into silence.

A short time suffices for Jack to hunt up a magistrate. Waiving an examination, Ned is held in bail for a large sum, which Mr. Tremont readily furnishes. As the two friends enter a hack, alone together at last, Ned appeals to Jack, "Don't blame me, Jack!" I could not bear it from you and I had to do it."

"Blame you! How could I? Why my only regret is you shot him. It was too honorable a death for such a villain. He should have been hung, drawn and quartered at the very least. And so the world will think, when they know all."

"They must not know all."

"What do you mean?"

"No one must know of the existence of that letter. You must destroy it."

"Do you realize what that means? I am afraid I cannot serve you without it. They will hang you. Ned I must use it."

"Ever since in a moment of rage I shot him, I have been thinking about it. For one instant I regretted it, fearing it might bring out the dreadful truth; but for an instant only. Then I was glad, for the secret has perished with him. I have thought it all out. I can die but once, and when better? I still have the love and respect of the few friends I care for. I shall not see them one by one drop from my side, till I too grow heart-sick and long for the hour, that will take me to them. Then, Jack, I shall go to join Mother with a feeling that I have done my duty as she would have wished. Could I have a better cause in which to fall, than in avenging a sister's wrongs? If that letter is destroyed, Edythe will still be respected and honored, as she is loved. In time with you to care for her, her life will be happy. While I shudder at the thought of what it must be, if all is known. The earth has not a corner, in which the shameful story would not seek her out. Every wind, that blew to waft her to some foreign shore, would bear with it the baneful breath of the scandal. If I live, it will be at the expense of her happiness, aye it would almost seem her honor. No! no! I could not do it! I could not do it!" Then after a short pause, "Better far of us two, that I should die now by a short

and comparatively painless death, than that she, so lovely, so true, so deserving to be happy, should drag out a weary, tortured existence, or what is far more likely to see her gradually waste away before our eyes, suffering agonies untold, which we could not relieve and to feel that every sigh, every moan, that escapes her lips, was born of my selfishness. I would be her murderer. Jack, think of yourself in my place and you cannot urge me to another course." Jack was silent; but a clasp of the hand expressed what he could not put in words.

As they alight and enter the house, Gertie meets them, and, forgetful of all that has passed between them, all their quarrels, or perhaps because of her part in bringing them about, rushes up to Ned and throws her arms around his neck, exclaiming, "I have heard about it all. How brave of you! I am sure all must be well now, since he is dead." Ned looks down into her eyes with a regretful expression in his own and stooping over leaves one kiss upon her lips; then with, "Tell her Jack. I cannot." dashes up stairs. Turning to Jack with a frightened look, she asks hurriedly, "What is the matter? Has any new trouble befallen him?" Jack answers in a tone that sounds harsh and indifferent, so severe is the struggle for self-command. This new trouble is too much. He knows that, if he gives way at all to his feelings, he must break down completely. His forced words sound almost, as though he were trying to make a jest of the matter. "It is but a sequel to the old. Ned is too honorable to attempt an escape, and I doubt if he could succeed, should he try."

"What should he want to escape for?"

"In our enlightened state, a man, who kills another, generally has to pay the penalty."

"Surely you don't think they would punish Ned, for shooting a man, who behaved like Roland?"

"They won't know anything of his behavior. Ned won't have that letter made public or even mentioned."

"You can't mean that. I don't know much about law; but I should suppose, if one man kills another without any reason, they would hang him." Gertie scarcely knows what she says.

"They are apt to."

"Oh Jack! What are you saying? You cannot be a friend of his to talk that way. You must use that letter, whether Ned is willing or not."

"He has convinced me that it will be better not to." His manner grows even more hard and cold from the strain upon him.

"Nonsense! I never heard of such a thing! Here you are, who pretend to be his dearest friend, coolly standing by, while he proposes to kill himself and forsooth you say, that he convinced you it will be better so. Sooner than see my friend destroy himself because of a fanciful scruple, I'd——"

"Do you call, being unwilling to wreck the happiness and life of a sister, a fanciful scruple?" exclaimed Jack, glad to find some vent for his emotion.

"So that is why you are convinced so easily. It is not that you love the brother less, but the sister more. I understand you now, Signior False Friend. It will do no good to argue with you, so I bid you good evening sans au revoir." She turns her back on him and is gone.

Though hurt that such a construction should be put upon his actions, Jack's resolve was too firm to be shaken by her insinuations.

Gertie is perplexed, as she sits alone way in the night, thinking of what is best to be done. Her mind is distracted too by recollections of what Ned has been to her all his life, since as children, he fought her battles for her and was her constant playmate. How he used to tyrannize over her; but woe to any one else who tried it. Among many another comes the memory of that day after she had read *Quentin Durward* to him, when he insisted on wearing a handkerchief of hers tied around his arm. How old and torn and dirty it was, too, yet nothing could induce him to take it off. Where was that handkerchief now? Did it still hold its position near his heart, where in his boyish pride, he had sworn it would stay till death. That word brought back the present with all its dreadful possibilities. What should she do? To appeal to Ned were worse than useless. When once he had made up his mind to what was right, no one knew better that he could not be moved from his determination. How exactly like him was the resolve to give his life for Edythe's peace of mind! How such an idea would take hold of his knightly nature! Jack she might try again; but he too, she was sure, would think as Ned. They both had the same reverence for women, the same ideas, many of them, she thinks, Quixotic, about man's duty toward them. No! Jack would have done the same, if he had been in Ned's place. She could do nothing with him. Edythe then was her last hope. It would be so hard too, to ask her to take a leading

part in her own undoing. Could she think of no other way? But though she ponders until her eyes close against her will and her mind is so dazed that she can scarce think of even where she is, no other plan suggests itself.



CHAPTER XXIII.

A gentle knock might have been heard at the door of Ned's den the next morning. "Come in!" Gertie enters. In a broken voice she begins, "Ned, I have come to ask your pardon for all my cruel behavior toward you; and to tell you whatever may happen I shall always be with you, for I love you." Putting her arms about his neck, "Ned, you will grant me forgiveness, won't you? It was all the fault of my wicked nature, my fondness for teasing. Don't say that I have destroyed all your love for me."

"Destroyed my love! You could not. And to have you come to me this way would earn forgiveness for the worst fault you could commit."

"I did treat you so abominably." If Ned had contradicted her she would have continued her self-abasement; as he did not, it was not in her nature not to justify

herself in some small degree at least. "You wronged me once, though."

"How was that?"

"If you promise to behave yourself and not become too much excited over it, I will show you." She opened a locket, that always hung about her neck, containing, as he knew, on one side the miniature of a brother, who died some years before, and on the other a lock of his hair. There with that self-same lock coiled round it lay the serpent ring he had given her. "My hands became so thin I was afraid of losing it. I put it there just before you came that evening at Bryn Mawr, and it has been there ever since." Need it be said Ned felt strong to bear anything now.

When Edythe hears of Victor's death she shows no sign of excitement or surprise. Nothing could surprise her now. After waiting in vain for some opening, which will enable her to introduce the subject uppermost in her mind, Gertie plunges in *medias res*.

"Edythe, do you know Jack and Ned won't make public what was in Victor's letter?"

Roused a little by this welcome news, Edythe says in a tone that shows her thoughts are still far away, "Won't they? I am glad of that."

"Glad! Why it is your duty to make them do it." Edythe shrinks back as if the words hurt her.

"I don't see why. It only means that they have found some other way out of our troubles. And oh Gertie! you can't know how much it means to me. Think of my position if they do show it. To see every one shrink

back from me as though I had some loathsome disease. To feel myself the object of compassion, only to be tolerated out of charity. I could not bear it."

With sorrow in her heart for the pain she must inflict, Gertie goes on with growing excitement, "And do you know what that way is? It is over Ned's dead body. To save you he will not raise a hand in his own defense. The court will convict and hang him before our very eyes, if that letter is not produced."

"Don't say that! Not that!" exclaims Edythe, at last aroused from her lethargy, her eyes unnaturally bright with horror and excitement.

"I wish I did not have to say it. But there is nothing else to be done. Jack agrees with Ned. It is all well enough for them to put us women on an altar and worship us, in imagination, but when it comes to killing one's self for us, it goes rather far; and that is what they are doing. You are the only one that can save Ned."

"How? I'll do anything, only I cannot think what. Quick! Tell me! You must have some plan." She grasps Gertie's hand with terrific force, half mad from all she has undergone.

"You must see Jack and make him make use of the letter. You have more influence with him than any one else, and in this case no one else could do anything. But first you must calm yourself. Lie down here, while I tell you what you must do, and in the meantime I shall send for him."

A few lines soon bring Jack to the house. After a brief wait, Edythe enters the room. All trace of excitement is gone and she begins calmly enough. "Jack, I

have sent for you to tell you, you must put my—Mr. Roland's letter in evidence; don't shake your head, but listen to me. Do you think that I could ever be happy knowing that I had sacrificed my brother's life to a mere selfish shrinking from what must be known sooner or later? You know too much of the world not to know, after you think about it, that such a secret as ours must become known, and that too, rapidly. There are others even now, who must know of it, and it could be discovered by any one who chose to investigate. We have furnished too interesting a theme for gossip for some one not to look it up. Still you are not convinced? Well my mind is made up. If you will not do it, I must. I shall appear in the court-room and demand an interview with the Judge. When he knows who I am, he will hear me. Then I shall lay the whole truth before him, and he shall see that justice is done. Ah Jack, you can save me all this degradation, how bitter no one can know better."

"God help me, if I do wrong! Edythe, I will. You have conquered." After a momentary pause, in sorrow he exclaims, "But what a life you will lead!"

"Alas, yes! Still others have borne as sorrowful and I must do it too," sighing deeply.

With a sudden fervor Jack steps forward and takes her cold hands in his. "Why should you? There must be some corner on this wide earth of ours, where such a misfortune does not leave a stain on its innocent victim. Let us seek it. Edythe, I need not tell you again that I love you. Nor do I ask for your love in return. Alas! it would be asking too much of a heart that has received

so rude, so cruel a shock to open in affection for another. It is for your own good, your own happiness. Trust yourself to me and I swear that no unkind word shall ever hurt you, no unkind act shall bring again the thought of this dreadful time. With Ned we shall go beyond the reach of prattling tongues, where once again Heaven may smile on us. We may again be happy."

Edythe for a few moments seems about to yield, then with a firm resolve she gently disengages herself, and in a voice choked with emotion, softly answers, "No, Jack, I like you far too well to allow you to bind yourself to such a miserable unfortunate as I; to allow you on my account to leave the place, where are all your friends, all your associations, where you are honored and respected, to go somewhere where you would begin your life anew without friends, in obscurity such as you suggest."

"No, life with you would be without friends, for you are my all. With you are all my associations, all my purposes. It is far more to me that you should be honored and respected, than that I should achieve the greatest success. In marrying you, indeed, I would obtain that which would be the greatest, the object of all my ambition, for which I have labored, and without which all else will be vain. Give me deepest obscurity with you, a thousand times, rather than the most brilliant triumph without."

"Your wife should be a help-mate, not a drag. You should be proud of her."

"And so I shall be of you. No other woman could ever compare with you."

"So you think now. The time would come when you would curse your folly in tying yourself to such a weight. Sooner than know that, for I would know it, try as hard as you might to conceal it, I would never see you again. No! No! Some day I shall hear of your marriage to a woman who is worthy of you; and believe me, no one will be gladder than I. Do not urge me further, it is useless and I have more now than I can bear." She clasps her hands to her head and staggers back on a lounge. At once he is kneeling at her feet, "Forgive me! That I, who would gladly bear the worst of tortures that you should be free from pain, should add one jot to all that you have suffered, unfeeling, selfish brute that I am!"

With an effort she controls herself. "I will not have you to call yourself names, Jack. It is our misfortune, not your fault. What woman would not be flattered at such an offer. Oh, why did I not know my heart before?" Then fearing she has said too much, hastily leaves the room.

The readers may think that our friends took an exaggerated view of how the world would treat Edythe. Let them think, though, that whenever there is the slightest cause for gossip, the woman bears all the blame, the man none; that this runs through all the relations between them. Let them think of this and it will be seen that they did not exaggerate. It is sad to think that this should be so; but women have themselves chiefly to thank for it. How often they are heard to say, that a man's a fool not to kiss a woman if she will let him! How much they prefer

a man whose reputation is that of an outrageous flirt, to the others generally far more worthy of preference. Let this be so. Should that induce men of any character to take a cowardly advantage of woman's weakness. Men claim to be the stronger sex. Why do they not show it then, in the noblest of forms, self command? Is it right for them to play the devil's part of tempter? Is it right that the tempted should bear the blame alone, pay the penalty for not being able to speak that word hardest to say, *No*? Is it fair? Is it honorable? Is it manly? to go scot free, like the cold-hearted villian you become, while your innocent victim is writhing under the tortures of envious tongues. Let many an unhappy life, many a blasted reputation answer in trumpet tones NO! When about to do something that seems to you, and may be in itself trifling, think of the pain, of the trouble, of the anguish that may light on her, think that she is of your mother's or your sister's sex, then if you have so much as a spark of honor, manliness and true courage, in Heaven's name don't !

Trouble is not confined to those at home alone. Far off on the broad Atlantic lies a steamer as helpless as the meanest of sailing vessels. Her powerful engines are still; her propeller moves no more. A gale is expected. But the tale of storm and shipwreck has been so often written that we shall pass this by, only informing our readers that Bill Paley passed through the ordeal safely and courageously. He lands at length in England, little the worse bodily, and far better in the world's opinion, for the trials he has undergone.

The few weeks before the trial pass slowly, and wearily. The day is at hand. The evidence of the prosecution is brief and mainly confined to the motive. Jack has cross-examined only one of their witnesses. This one was Victor's valet Gustave. On direct examination he testified that there was bad blood between them; that his master had said, Mr. Saxon thought he had cause to dislike him. Jack asked him whether this was in any way caused by a letter from Victor. The witness answered yes, then no, he thought not and finally that he was sure not. Jack watched him closely for a minute or two, but asked no more questions. Nothing else worthy of note took place till he rose to open the defense. He made no opening speech, offered Victor's letter in evidence, which caused a great sensation, called a couple of witnesses to prove that Victor had written it and then addressed the jury. "Gentlemen of the jury: I presume my learned friend, the opposing counsel will impress upon you the fact that when you entered this box you swore to decide this case in accordance with the law and the facts. But you were men before you were jurors, and your very oath was taken under God's law, to which you, as well as all mankind are subject, and of which our law is but a fallible exponent. A cardinal principle of that law is to do unto others as you would be done by. Gentleman of the jury, I know that not one of you could leave this court with a feeling of duty well performed, a feeling of aught but shame, should you condemn the prisoner for doing what you and every one of us I hope would have done. If a burglar entered your house to steal even the least val-

uable of your possessions, would you not be justified in, would you hesitate for an instant about shooting him? Should any one attempt then to rob you of what is a hundred fold more dear than the most precious of your belongings could ever be, what would you do? Would you calmly allow him to get off with it without seeking to exact reparation? This was my client's position.

Go back with me only one short year. Picture to yourself his life, his happy home. Put yourself in his place. A mother and sister waiting to welcome you after a hard day's labor. A mother, from whom you have never had an unkind word, rejoicing in your success, sympathizing in your failure. A sister, though beautiful and beloved, knowing none, who in her thoughts can compare with you; honoring, nay almost worshiping you. Both by every art that woman can achieve, seeking to afford you amusement and relaxation, striving to show their love and pride. The robber enters under the guise of smooth and oily manners. So charming in his beauty and accomplishments that he insinuates himself into your jealously guarded home-circle. You make him a welcome guest, never dreaming of the contemptible treachery that lurks beneath those fascinating looks and tones. At last it strikes. With one blow this favored friend deprives your mother of the life you would gladly give your own to save, your sister of what is far, far, more dear. Was there ever a more righteous, a more justifiable vengeance?

Some may say that vengeance should be left to the law. But there are some crimes so atrocious that our

law cannot deal with them. The remedy by dragging a fair name through the slime of a police court, would be more painful to a sensitive nature than the worst crime against her. No! no! It should not be done. It would be far more dishonorable to seek vengeance from the law than even to remain quiet, acquiescing in foul dishonor. Yet the one who could do this, is far too base, too cowardly to bear the name of man. And it is as man to man, not as lawyer to jurors, that I plead with you to uphold my friend in the blow that he has struck in what is to our race, and may it always be, the noblest of battles!

My friends, it is an awful thing to condemn a man to death, to send a soul to eternity, and he, who does so, should be sure that he is right, not assume such responsibility, with the slightest doubt upon his mind. Even then he should remember that it is better to err on the side of leniency than of severity, that justice should be tempered with mercy. If you will think of this, and think at the same time of your mothers, beloved and honored, who have made you what you are; of your sisters, who it may be, look upon you as their protectors, and then of your daughters growing up around you, lovely and delicate, who might sometime, though I sincerely hope not, stand in need of an avenger; if you will keep this in mind, I shall cheerfully leave the decision in your hands, knowing that in your sound judgment lies his surest path to safety."

Jack has watched their expressions, has seen them one by one give unmistakable signs of acquiescence, so takes his seat with the utmost confidence, the utmost happi-

ness. As he does so, the District Attorney, Mr. Collins, whose family has been mentioned before, comes over and offers to withdraw the prosecution. Jack thanked him, but said he thought Ned would be better satisfied by an acquittal. Mr. Collins declined to make an argument, and after a colorless charge, the jury rendered a verdict of Not Guilty without leaving their seats.



CHAPTER XXIV.

Ned and Gertie are to be married in a few months. So she remains in town to make her preparations; while he and Edythe, wishing to leave for a little while the scenes that have become so painful to them, have gone once more to where they had spent such happy weeks two years before. Jack has accompanied them on their journey, but he is to return the next day. He and Edythe are wandering along the river, Lover's Leap rising before them resplendent in the morning sun, its glorious blue bringing back many a sweet yet bitter memory.

"Do you remember, Jack, the day we climbed that hill? I could not do that now. Do you remember my saying, I did not understand how that Indian girl could destroy herself? I understand it now. Ah me! I fear that if I were there and saw the river beneath, so dark and tempting, I, too, would make the leap and be at rest at last."

"Nonsense!" A transient look of pain just passing over his face. "You don't know what you are saying. You have many happy hours before you."

"No! I was too happy. I feared it could not last. To every one sorrow must come sooner or later in some way or other. Now mine has come and I cannot bear it. Hardest of all to endure, is the world's pity."

"Pity! Envy it should rather be. Every woman should envy you, your character, your talents, and your beauty."

"There are few, who think like you, Jack." A pause during which both watch the boughs and leaves hurrying past on the troubled waters. Then she goes on. "But then there are few men like you in every way. If there were more, how fortunate we women would be!"

"That I am not worse than most men, is due to you alone, Edythe."

"Due to me? Why I have brought you nothing save pain and sadness, Jack."

"All the good there is in me was born of my love of you. How could I go wrong, with you ever near with your lofty thoughts and high ideals of life, your hatred of anything mean or low. When any temptation came in my way, I thought, 'What will Edythe think of this?' And it vanished immediately. Though I never wed you, not once shall I regret my love for you. It has been my safeguard. It has given me most of my pleasure, and while hope lasted, not a moment of sadness. To love a noble woman can bring only good to any man and where, as I, he has no mother and no sister, it is by far the best thing that can happen to him. A man of ordinary character is apt to be, I think, what his first love made him. If women only knew how powerful for good they can be, fewer of them, I am sure, would snub or laugh at their boy-lovers." *Remember!!*

"Yes, you are right. Particularly as most men take to drink after such a disappointment. There again you showed your strength of character by not doing so."

“That was doubly due to you. My habits had by that time been formed by my friendship with you, and habit is an all powerful factor in such matters. Then you taught me to love riding, and I know of no worry so bad, that a tearing gallop on a spirited horse will not drive it away. To feel a generous animal bounding along beneath you, his chest heaving, his ears pointed, now front, now back, his nostrils quivering, his whole frame trembling from excitement and elation—then to feel that thrill of secret sympathy that makes horse and rider one glorious whole. No! There can be no thought so painful, so heartrending as not to succumb to such a feeling. Horace could never have been a rider, for he wrote that much quoted but false line about dull care mounting behind you. Never! It could not! I know it too well. I could give it seven pounds in every mile and leave it far behind. You could do it too. It would be the very thing for you. You must try——” When suddenly there comes a rush with shouts of “There he goes!” “He’s sinking!” “No! There he is again.” Out in mid-stream could just be seen the head of a gray-haired man, who seemed to be struggling vainly with the rapid current that swept him along.

“Come Jack! There’s a boat just below. We must try to rescue him!” exclaims Ned coming up to them, and off they go at the top of their speed. It takes but a moment to unfasten the boat, and Ned’s strong arms soon send it along cutting the water so swiftly, that at every instant it seems about to be dashed to pieces against the rocks that fill the river, now swollen by the spring rains into an angry, seething torrent. Jack just suc-

ceeds in avoiding them ; good fortune favoring his skill. On they go, now grounding on a little shoal, now grinding the gunwale against a rock, the roundness of whose edge alone saves them from destruction. On ! and on ! Nearer and nearer to him they draw. Another stroke and they will reach him. Now comes the dangerous moment. Should the current prove too strong for them, their boat may dash against him and that must mean his death. Ned backs with all his strength. To no purpose. The loss of headway makes the boat unmanageable in the face of that torrent, the rush of water sweeps it on, and Jack failing in his endeavor to pull him in, the bow passes over him. A murmur of dismay arises on the shore ; then a shout of "Take care !" for all their energy is needed now to save themselves. They are driving with terrific force directly toward a jagged mass of rock that threatens to destroy them. Too late to stop her now. They both spring up, each with an oar, and as they drift broad-side on, attempt to break the force of the shock. They do, but break something else too. For their oars snap, they rest against the reef, keeling over from the weight of the water and their boat half fills, when a sudden eddy whirls them far out into the stream. They are adrift without an oar, hurried on by the force of a furious flood. At a word from Jack, they stoop, tear the planks from the thwarts and make a gallant effort to gain the shore. Another eddy aids them, and after a brief but exciting struggle they at last do so. When there, they explain it was all a mistake, they had well nigh lost their lives to save the lungs of a bullock some one had slaughtered up the stream, which had had the appearance of an old man's head.

(To set at rest any doubts as to the probability of this, we wish to state that the author was present at one exactly similar occurrence.)

Jack coming in one afternoon a week afterwards, finds Gertie deep in the mysteries of her trousseau. Patient waiting is no loss, they say. Jack tries hard to think so, as he paces the drawing-room, while she is engaged with Cissie deciding the momentous question; whether her traveling suit shall be grey or light brown. At last she arrives, and losing no time he says, "You are the only one who seems to be able to do anything successfully for Edythe or Ned, so I have come to ask your help. You are going to the Collins's to dinner to-night, are you not?"

"Yes. It will be the first place I have gone, and no one else is to be there, so I thought there would be nothing out of the way in my going. What can I do for you there?"

"At the trial when I cross-examined Roland's valet, he became confused, and from his appearance led me to believe that he knew something more about the contents of that letter and Roland's purposes, than he chose to tell. I have had a close watch kept on him ever since. The result has been to confirm my suspicions. He won't talk, however, and his devotion to his master is remarkable, and his hatred for Ned equally so. It seems a small thing; but it is in neglecting these small things that we often make our worst mistakes. So I am bound to get at the bottom of it."

"How can I help you?"

"I think, that if I could examine him from the other side of the case, I might make something of him. It is worth trying at all events. I have a fancy for detective work of the right kind. If you could persuade Mr. Collins to let me see this man in one of his offices and under the name of an assistant, I would disguise myself, so he could never know me."

"And then you could draw him out. I see. You may depend on me. The dear old man is quite in love with me himself, so I know he will do what I ask him."

"I would see him myself; but he has the reputation among the younger lawyers of being very inaccessible, and he might look upon my request as a piece of impertinence; while if you propose it, he will think it at worst no more than a piece of girlish folly and may become interested in it."

Gertie was as good as her word. By using some of the diplomacy, with which most women are gifted by nature, she made it appear almost as though it were his proposal. Mr. Collins was so much pleased with himself for thinking of it, that he wanted to examine the man himself. It was far more difficult to get him out of that idea than to obtain his consent to Jack's plan. He had been very much distressed by the misfortunes of the Saxon family and at having to conduct the prosecution against Ned, so was delighted at the chance of doing them a service.

So successful was the disguise, which the costumer and Jack between them succeeded in arranging, that Gertie herself, who had insisted on seeing it, was deceived at first. As he left her, she wished him all success and asked him

half in earnest, half in jest, whether she would pray for it. In the same tone he answered, "Pray that the Recording Angel may drop a tear to blot out all the fibs I shall tell this afternoon. May he be something of a Jesuit and think that in this case 'the end justifies the means.'"

Arrived at Mr. Collins's office, he had the table, at which he was to sit, drawn to a corner, where but little light could fall on him, then adjusting a pair of eyeglasses, a precaution adopted probably because of some novel he had read, proceeded to busy himself with the pile of papers before him. When the valet entered he was deep in their consideration. Withdrawing his attention from them apparently with some difficulty, he began to speak in a formal tone, slowly and distinctly, watching closely the effect of each word. Gustave was a Swede, so that his words, which would probably have sounded strange to an American, were well calculated to make an impression on him.

"The authorities have not been satisfied with the way in which the trial of Edward Saxon was conducted. Mr. Collins is therefore looking up testimony to enable him to reopen the case." (An impossibility.) "He asked me to look over the testimony, to see whether I could find anything worth investigating. There is scarcely anything. However, I notice here—no, here it is—that the attorney for the defence asked you something about a letter from Roland, evidently the same one that he afterwards introduced; but he stopped short after the first question. Was there anything more you knew about it?"

The man looked around the room uneasily, moved

about in his chair and after a long pause answered, nothing except that he knew it had been sent.

"Well, if you know nothing else, I might as well go on to something different. But this is very important, for their whole defence is based on that letter." Tentatively he goes on, "If we could prove it a forgery for instance, then there would be no good cause for the shooting and we might hang Saxon yet." An intense expression of pleasure flashed across Gustave's face, and he began, "If I thought—" then changed his mind. "If that letter is so important to them, why do the other side want to be asking me about it just as your honor has been?"

"Oh they are probably afraid you know too much and want to get you out of the country, if they find you do."

"If that letter wasn't true would it do as well as if it were a forgery?"

Jack begins to see light, but fears that the valet may be cunning of fence; so it is not till after some thought, that he answers: Gustave in the mean time staring at him with ill-concealed anxiety. "Yes, for all cause for the crime would then be gone."

"And if the marriage was legal, would that do also?"

Jack almost spoilt the whole affect of his manner, by his strong desire to spring from his chair in surprise and joy; but controlled it by a powerful effort, aided by the thought that the man might be inventing to help his revenge.

"Yes, that would do too," he said calmly. "If that is so, you must tell me all you know, so that we shall lose

no time in hunting up the proof." Then as if delighted to unburden his mind of what had been so long locked up within it, he poured forth his story in such a torrent of words, that his English, as a rule excellent, became confused and often mixed with Swedish. Jack had frequently to interrupt him, and much difficulty in understanding him. To save the reader the trouble, we shall translate his words into plain English, and add a few things he did not know. Victor for a long time had been thinking over the plan, which had been suggested to him by the conduct of the servant in Hazel Kirke. Dr. Dixon's death occurring soon afterward, removed the most serious obstacle to its accomplishment; for of course, he knew of the existence of the license, and it had been left in his possession. Victor as one of his executors easily made opportunity for a man, under his instructions to obtain possession of and destroy it. This same man stole and destroyed the records of about that time from the County Clerk's office. So all was ready for the springing of the mine. Victor still hesitated, however, swung hither and thither by every blast of passion, till Christmas Eve. He had just heard of the burning of the County Clerk's office. So fortune seemed to have removed the only chance of failure and detection. We were spectators of that contest; we know his evil genius conquered, and we have seen the consequences. Gustave had no idea what had become of the man who stole the records and license, and said furthermore that Victor was sure they had been destroyed. Jack saw how very difficult a road he had to travel, even though the first step had been so successfully taken. He had no proof,

save Gustave's word, and he would not testify if he found it was to benefit those, for whom he had so intense a hatred. Getting rid of him and assuring him that his testimony would in all likelihood lead to a new trial; he was just wishing he had some hidden witnesses, when a door opened and Ada Merton came in. He had a hidden witness, yet scarcely the one he would have chosen. Though he rose as she entered wearing a thick crape veil, he was silent, not knowing whether she recognized him or not. Her first words reassured him. "Do not be alarmed or disappointed, sir, at my having overheard your conversation with this man Gustave. Our objects are the same. I came here to see whether anything could be done toward re-opening the case, as you call it, and I was referred to you. Probably I can help you."

"I shall be glad of your help, Madam."

"I hate Ned Saxon so, that I would do anything, give anything, if I could injure him. You must strain every nerve, spare neither time nor money, leave no stone unturned to hunt him down. And if you succeed in hanging him, I shall give you the largest fee you ever received." He could see her cold grey eyes glisten, even through the veil.

"Though to touch him by this means will benefit his silly sister; yet her pride has had its fall, her name has been dragged through the mire, and some of it must stick. But enough of this. Let me hear your plans. You must be convinced that I am an ally now, and if I can help you with my money or in any other way, I shall do it."

Jack would gladly have disclosed who he was, and put an end to this scene and her insults to Edythe; but the thought that she might aid him, and certainly could do no more than offend his ears, led him to continue his dissimulation.

"The first thing I can think of, is to try to trace the man who stole those records. The valet, you perhaps heard, had no idea where he was."

"I can aid you at once then. I know that this man is out of the country somewhere. Victor told me so. Where it was I can't think. But I know he received several letters from him. If you would examine Mr. Roland's letters, you might find some clue. I shall give you a note to the man in charge of the house, which will enable you to look over them without further trouble." She sits down and writes.

"What is your name?"

"James Crogget, Madam." He has been expecting this.

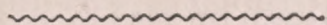
"Here it is; and now can you think of anything else to be done?"

"Nothing, till after I have gone through those letters."

"Then I shall bid you, good morning. If you need any money to prosecute your researches, I will supply it; and I wish you to report to me your success with those letters." She gave him her card, bowed and passed out.

"Whew! Who would have dreamt of this! It may all be for the best though. Let me see, I must telegraph to Ned at once. I wonder what Edythe is doing. To think that Ada Merton should offer her help in clearing

Edythe's name, and should do it in a substantial way, too," looking at her note, as these thoughts pass through his mind. "It is indeed, fighting the devil with his own weapons."



CHAPTER XXV.

Though Jack can only wonder what Edythe is doing, if he knew, how he would long to accompany us, as we take flight to the South on the wings of thought and see for ourselves. But before we do so, it will be better to make a short stop in front of the door from which he is descending. His disguise has been removed, and he is himself again. As he reaches the street he is accosted by Gustave, who was about to ascend the steps. Let us hear what they are saying; it may prove interesting. The Swede is telling Jack, that he has just come from the District Attorney's office, where he had fooled a young lawyer into believing that his master's marriage was legal and that a license had been obtained; but that all this was false. He tells this apparently so truthfully that Jack believes him. While he is pondering over it and asking a few questions in a disheartened tone, we shall make our trip to North Carolina.

Edythe is wandering up the stream that waters the base of Old Round Top; a lovely walk by the merry brook with its melodious rippling. Poor Jacobite, who accompanies her, cannot enjoy its cheerful music, cannot hunt the jolly birds that flit about them, challenging him to a chase. No; he walks along in dignified silence out of respect for his mistress's sadness. Why is it she no longer plays with him as she used to do, though now they are in the country that both of them love so dearly? Why does he never hear her merry laugh that was wont to ring out so cheerily? She was always sad now, and never more so than as she reaches her favorite spot, where the stream falling in a foaming sheet plunges into a deep, calm pool, surrounded by overhanging trees and bushes. There under a shade so dense that a sunbeam rarely penetrates, Edythe reclines in mournful reverie, brooding over her misfortunes. To-day they seem so overwhelming that she can bear them no longer. Why should she not put an end to them? The water lies temptingly beneath with its dark bosom unbroken save where the fall churns the water to a snowy white. What whiter, purer shroud could she have than it would make? To her disordered fancy it seems placed there for that very purpose. Who was it told her? Where did she read it? That drowning was the least painful death. Why should she not? No one will miss her much now. Ned will soon have Gertie to think of, to care for. If she lives, it will only be to be a burden upon him. If she dies, he will sometimes give a thought to the sister he once had loved. Jack, too, will miss her at first: but as she told him, he will some day marry

another girl, who may make him happy, as she could not, who will help him in that noble career she was sure lay before him, and in which she could only be a drag. But then to think of another with the right to cheer and comfort him, to share his every thought, to be his wife! Ah! She could not bear to think of it. She would be free at last! She half rises, when Jacobite, who has been at her feet looking up sorrowfully into her face, rises too, and placing one paw appealingly on her arm, rubs his nose against her, as if to show that whoever else may desert her, he will always be her faithful servitor.

His action brings a healthful change of thought, and sinking back again, she caresses his handsome head, saying, "I was wrong, Jacky. You would miss me, if no one else did." For a little while he rests his head upon her lap, wagging his tail and blinking sympathetically at her. But her thoughts stray once more, and unintentionally she gives him a push, which he interprets to mean his dismissal, and he retires. A squirrel at that moment attracts his attention, and the prospect of a chase is too tempting to be resisted. Edythe sees him go, and thinks he, too, has deserted her.

The dark green water is still there, and as she watches it hurrying down over the rocks above, she thinks of it as showing her the way. Its broken course and rushing fall seem typical of her troubled life, while below it finds peace and quiet in the restful bosom of the pool. Why should she not, too, find peace and quiet there? One plunge and all will be over. She will join her mother, where no bitter tongue can make her feel her wretched lot, where she will be at rest.

Where is Jacobite now? Why don't he come to the rescue? Don't stand there wagging your tail as you look down the path. You should be up and doing. Your mistress needs you far more now than she ever did before, as she draws near to what in a few short seconds more will be her last resting place. She murmurs, "Good-bye, Ned. Now and then perhaps you will think of your wretched sister. Good-bye, good-bye, Jack. We might have been so happy." Is there none to save her now, none to keep her back. The depths of the water answer "None!" She is on the very brink, and one step more will end it all. Jacobite! Ah, Jacobite, where is your boasted instinct now? Can you feel no presentiment of what she is about to do? Is there nothing to save her? Must she perish thus unheeded, like many another as young, as lovely, done to death by man's foul treachery? But no! At last the dog gives a bark, a joyful bark. It restrains her for one instant, and in that instant she hears Ned's cheery voice calling for her, "Edythe! Edythe! Where are you?" A moment later he is with her, little thinking how near that meeting had been so sad a one.

"Splendid news, Edythe! I might almost say the best news. Jack telegraphs that he has come across something that leads him to believe a license was obtained. He will follow it up and write particulars. Hurrah for Jack! All will come out right now. Why, what is the matter with you?" The expression of supreme resolve and resignation, the far away look of one who has bidden farewell to life and hope, has not left her eyes, her face, and it is only at his question that she banishes it.

"You look as if you didn't believe it."

"I cannot."

"But why? Jack is not often mistaken, and he would not send us word if he didn't feel pretty confident."

"His desire that it should be so, has led him astray. No, my mind is too accustomed to think of things as they are, for me to delude myself by false hopes. The happiness and the light of my life is gone. I can be but a miserable burden on you all from now on."

"What an absurdity! Can you believe that I could ever think of you as such? You should not let your morbid fancies take so strong a hold on you. Come, shake them off and be yourself again."

"It is all well enough for you to laugh and be gay, for you have Gertie to make you so; but I—" A sob breaks off the sentence.

"This news is what made me feel so, and it should do so to you also. Wait till we get Jack's letter, and then we shall know what is the truth."

They were destined to hear it even before his letter could have reached them.

Jack though disappointed, as we have said, continued to ask questions of the Swede. One of these was, why he had taken the trouble to come to him? The answer was, because they talked of re-opening the case, and he thought Jack should know. This at once aroused the latter's suspicions, and in connection with the intense satisfaction that appeared in Gustave's face at the disheartened tone of his voice, led him to believe that there might still be something in what he had said before; that perhaps the man had been even sharper than he

thought, had watched for him as he left the office and followed him home. Still it was evidently dangerous to trust to anything so accomplished a liar might say. His suspicions seemed to receive confirmation from the fact that Gustave followed him at a distance as he hurried round to Roland's house, where the note readily obtained permission for him, from the man in charge, to go through Victor's letters; a long and tedious task.

At last his patience was in some degree rewarded. A small portion of a torn letter was found, in which some one wrote, that he was in need of money, and that, if he did not get it, he would come home and make it hot for Mr. Roland, by publishing why he went abroad, and letting his wife know all about it. That was all. No date or name helped him to the solution of the difficulty. Not even a water mark was there to tell where the paper had been made. A little thing; but it is "trifles light as air" that furnish to some, proof as strong as adamant. It was a long day since Jack had been as happy. Though nothing more was found, that was enough to make him believe that all would yet be well.

The tremendous difficulties in the way of clearing Edythe's name, moved him not a whit. It was enough to know that they were but difficulties, not impossibilities. He knew he must arrange a plan of action, and the sending of a detective to Kentucky was his first thought. Before he did that, however, he must let Gertie know of the great discovery.

As he was descending the stairs, who should he meet but Ada Merton. "So you were the man who played the part at Mr. Collins's office. James Crogget, indeed.

I congratulate you on your skill in lying, which can only have been acquired by long practice." Jack smiled, but did not forget he was talking to a woman. "I see you do not seem discouraged by what Gustave afterwards said."

"No. Thanks to your note, I have found enough to enable me to believe his first statement rather than his last."

"You promised to report; but I suppose you can break your promises as well as tell untruths."

"No. I'll tell you all I know. It is what you told me. That man is abroad somewhere. I found a letter, which leads me to think that, and confirms Gustave's statement."

"Since you have performed your part of the programme so well, I shall perform mine. If you need any money, call on me and I shall gladly furnish it," with a sarcastic smile. "It must give you great pleasure to know, that in helping the sister, you are destroying the brother; that the discovery of the truth will lead to Ned Saxon's execution."

"Scarcely. A man cannot be tried twice for his life for the same crime. Ned is safe."

"What? Oh! I see. That was another lie. What a Machiavelli we have developed here. That old Italian would blush indeed, before the product of Modern Philadelphia. But, never mind, I can comfort you with the knowledge of how the world looks upon your dainty, delicate Edythe now. There are very few, though I have tried hard, whom I can convince, that she was the ignorant, innocent plaything you would make her out.

That her friends should have been so careless. Ah! when one has the reputation of a prude, one is apt to be the very worst——” And on she went, her fury rapidly increasing. We will no longer follow the angry woman’s torrent of abuse, much of which would be unfit for repetition. Jack, unable to pass her on the narrow staircase, closed his ears and thought of other things, till she was done.

Cissie was with Gertie when he told her his discovery. Seeing only the bright side of the picture, they were overjoyed. They laughed at Jack when he attempted to suggest, that the proof of what they believed might be difficult. They even finished by infecting him with their confidence. “How much we owe to you, Gertie! If it had not been for your determination, Ned might have sacrificed himself for nothing. You were the only one of us that kept your senses. I always said you would surprise us all some day, and now you have done it! I almost believe you are the queen of the fairies come to earth to take care of us. If you could only bring to light those records now, I would be sure of it.”

“I’m just about big enough to be her Majesty.”

“Yes, and pretty enough, too.”

“I only wish I was Titania. I’d have those papers here in a hurry. I’d wave my magic wand three times before this door,” (suited the action to the word) “and cry, ‘Hie thee hither Puck! bringing with thee what we wish!’ And he would burst open the door with a cry of——”

“Here they are! I know it must be what you want,”

exclaimed Bill dashing in, almost knocking Gertie over, as he flung back the door. He held a roll of papers in his hand, which he at once tossed to Gertie. Without a suspicion of greeting to him, they hastily tore them open, to find among them not only the record, but the license, too, which the thief had kept to use in forcing money from Victor. Bill had been lucky enough to run across them in the satchel at the Alcasar. Though knowing nothing of the tragic events at home, he felt sure that some mischief must be on foot, so hurried home as fast as steam would let him.

Jack and Gertie overwhelm him with thanks and congratulations, while Cissie merely says: "No wonder they congratulate you. It is so rarely that you show good sense, that it ought to be a subject of the liveliest congratulation for your friends, when you do."

Bill does not attempt to answer her sharp speech, though a merry twinkle appears in his eyes. Afterward when Jack and Gertie wisely leave; the one to telegraph South at once, the other on some pretext, he turns to her with, "That sarcastic remark of yours was sweetest music to my ears. It shows that you are not changed, and you must acknowledge I have fairly won my bride."



CHAPTER XXVI.

Two years have passed away, and in the gray of an Autumn morning, our old friend Jack is standing on the dock of the American Line, looking far away down the river with an expectant expression on his joyful face. So joyful is it, that even the mist seems infected by it and in his neighborhood takes on a lighter, more cheerful hue. The sun at last clears away the mist and dries the dripping masts and decks of a ship at anchor there, dries the dripping clothes of the men and women gathered on the dock. It mounts higher and higher and many are the grumblings at this delay; but Jack never loses his hopeful expression. And well may he be hopeful, for the steamer they await is bringing back all that makes life lovely to him, his hope, his heart, his all. As the great steamer draws near with its mass of human freight, he sees but one face, one form. Long before any of his neighbors have made out their friends, his eyes rest on the figure that is so dear to him. Foremost among the crowd he gains the deck. A single look, a single word tells him that all is well now and forevermore.

The winter has passed away and once again we find Edythe and Jack at their favorite haunt in North Carolina. They are in a little rustic summer-house that overlooks the river, and before them is the well remembered scene, while at their feet lies Jacobite. Edythe is speaking.

"Ah Jack, though I could not think it then, as I should, I know now that that dreadful time was all for the best. Mother, you know, could not have lived more than a few weeks longer at the most; and I shudder even now to think what my life with Victor must have been, from which there was no other escape. While with you it is so happy, so happy, Jack."

"May you always think so, Edythe. Mine with you could never be otherwise."

"Jack, do you know I loved you even when I married Victor. I did not know it then; for he charmed me, as a snake would a bird. But looking back now, remembering how I felt the night I told you of my engagement; the longing to be free, that more than once came to me even when Victor was still in love with me, still kind; the feeling of joy, that now and then would come through all my pain, that at last it was not wrong to dream of you; all this tells me that even then I loved you, that I did not know myself."

His answer was a highly satisfactory one; but we are not prepared to state what it was.

They were interrupted by the arrival of Bill and Cissie. As soon as the preliminary arrangements have been made and the four are together on the porch, the latter begins, "Next time you want us to join you anywhere, Jack, you must come on to see that Will" (she has changed the name since their marriage) "gets there safely. It is too big a contract for me to undertake."

"Don't listen to her slanders."

"They're not slanders. Wait till I have told you all, and then judge for yourselves. First when we were

leaving home, he sent our trunks to the Broad Street Station, and thought that was enough to get them on. So when we reached Baltimore, we had to wait several days, till we could have them sent to us."

"Yes; Cissie wasn't willing to appear in Washington without all her fixings and jimcracks. She was sure she would captivate at least half a dozen Senators and Members of the Cabinet, if not the President. Poor girl, not even one would look at her."

"Never mind, Cissie," said Edythe, "We heard of your success there, so know how much to believe of what he says."

"Well, we reached Washington safely enough and so did our trunks; but when we got there, Bill (these adventures are so much like his old self, I must call him that) had left all his clothes at home. I am sure I don't know what he meant to dress in."

"Come now, Ciss! Yon know there were half a dozen handkerchiefs, a necktie and some collars."

"That may be the way they dress in South America, Bill. But certainly not here," remarked Jack.

"And you have gone back on me too!"

"When we left Washington everything was correct, for I saw to it myself. As we were going through Virginia, I noticed that Bill would keep taking the checks from his pocket and looking at them with a puzzled expression. Finally he came over to me with a look of triumph, saying 'Ciss, you have made a mistake.' He insisted upon it that they were checks for some way station, and it was all I could do to persuade him that the 'way' was to be joined to the 'rail-' on the line

above. Then at Lynchburg, while we were changing wheels; trunks, I think, they call it."

"Wrong again, Cissie. Your mind is crazy on the subject of trunks. I suppose you'll be wanting to wear them, next. Trucks, you mean."

"Well, then, trucks. At any rate, he got off to see it done. Why in the world he took them, I or no other sensible person could understand; but he carried off with him his new overcoat and my hand-bag. The train left sooner than he expected. He had to run for it and left both behind."

"What did I marry a rich wife for, if it wasn't to be able to lose an overcoat when I pleased."

"But you lost at the same time my patent hair-pins and curling-tongs. I will have to sponge on you, Edythe."

"What's my neighbor's is mine and what's mine's my own," interposed Bill.

"Then he made me stay over a day at the railroad hotel at Morristown, without a solitary thing to do, so that he could drive with some one he met on the cars to see an old volcano, where sulphur could be taken out 'in large and paying' quantities. I was sure he only enticed Will away to rob him, so you may imagine the pleasure of my day. Then just now he went to sleep on the train. It was all I could do by shaking and pinching to get him off at this station. So you must see that he goes straight when we leave."

"I'll do so gladly, providing I can put a straight-jacket on him," said Jack.

"To paraphrase somebody, save me from my wife, and

I can save myself from all others," began Bill. "Now, listen to my slander, which is far more interesting. What do you think has happened to Ada Merton."

"What?"

"He has been rehearsing on me," says Cissie.

"Her heart's in the Highlands, her heart is not here.

Her heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing a dear."

"That is as some fellows I know do it. She has gone to London to buy one. In plain English, she has gone abroad in hopes of capturing a title. Don't I hope she may get it."

"She probably will," said Jack. "I can tell you some gossip, too. Lizzie Collins's engagement is announced to Arthur Scorville."

Bill answers "I expected it. So à la Ollendorf, the great-grand son of the shoemaker, is to marry the daughter of the blacksmith"

Here Ned comes up, fine looking as ever, and beside him, Gertie, a perfect flower garden. Her arms and dress are so hidden by the mass of azaleas of every color, with which they are laden, that you can only see her face above a sea of lovely blossoms, while about her head she wears a wreath of arbutus. So fair and girlish does she look, that no one would imagine the youngster upstairs, who is just beginning to toddle about and find himself the monarch of all he surveys, would call her Mother.

Here, where we first met them, let us bid them all farewell, as we have nothing more to relate. Happiness, it is said, is uneventful. Though you could not convince Jack of this. Every day is to him a whole chapter of

events. The most interesting of which is, when, in the evening after his day's work, Edythe sings song after song to him alone. What memories of the past they recall! How often has he heard them! But one old favorite she never sings now and that is, "At the Ferry."



THE END.

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